PROFESSION AND PRACTICE.

BY

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

I gladly embrace the opportunity afforded me by the publication of a new edition of this work, to express at once my gratitude for the kind reception with which it has been favoured, and my deepened conviction of the wide-spread extent, and destructive results of that antinomian spirit, which pervades so much of the religious profession of our day.

There is assuredly the most urgent requirement for the faithful ministers of the Gospel insisting, with the greatest earnestness and frequency, in their pulpit and pastoral ministrations, on the indispensable necessity, and the distinguishing characteristics of that holiness, and unreserved devotedness of heart and life to the service of "God, our Saviour," without which the clearest views of divine truth, and the most undoubting assurance of acceptance

with God, are utterly in vain; yea, can only aggravate the guilt, and therefore increase the condemnation of the unrenewed soul. And faithfully should they lift up the warning voice of solemn expostulation, and denounce the awful judgments of God against all unsanctified professors of evangelical truth, declaring, on the authority of His holy word, that such professors, "as knowing their Divine Master's will, and not doing it, shall be beaten with many stripes;" and that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for *them*.

At the same time, it should never be forgotten, that if we would indeed desire to be instrumental in checking the progress of this destructive disease, which is, we fear, slaying its thousands of religious professors in our day, we must use only scriptural remedies. We must not throw into the shade the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, which constitute its peculiar excellence, as a divine scheme for the promotion of the glory of God in the salvation of man, because these doctrines have been per-

verted or profaned. This is especially to be observed of the doctrine of the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness, which ought not to be *less prominently*, but only *more practically* enforced, in consideration of its having been made the chief basis of the antinomian scheme.

That its direct tendency, when scripturally understood, is altogether the very reverse of any encouragement to antinomian licentiousness—yea! that it is the most powerful instrument which God, the Holy Ghost employs, in carrying on the work of sanctification in the believer's soul, has been most satisfactorily shewn by many distinguished writers in our day, and by none more unanswerably than by that truly Christian philosopher, Doctor Chalmers, in his invaluable Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans—a work which should be deeply studied by all, who desire to avail themselves of the best human aid in the investigation of this most important and interesting subject. One extract from this incomparable work I cannot deny myself the pleasure of inserting, in confirmation of the truth of what I have above

declared. "The proposal that Christ's righteousness shall become your righteousness in such a way, as that you will be honoured and rewarded, and loved, and dealt with by God, just as you would have been, had this righteousness been yielded in your own person, and by your own performances, *this*, ye hearers, is the *very jet and essence* of the Gospel!" What words could more strongly express a deep conviction of the paramount importance of the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness—and how high the value of *such* a testimony from *such* a master in Israel! Now let us mark the same author's conviction of the sanctifying influence of this doctrine. "It is only," he says, "when surrounded with this element, that a holy God can regard you with complacency; and to complete the triumphs of the Gospel administration, it is only when breathing in this atmosphere, that you inhale the delights of an affectionate and confiding piety—that the soul breaks forth, in the full triumph of her own emancipated powers, on the career of devoted and aspiring obedience—that life and happiness shed the

very air of heaven around a believer's heart, and make the service of God, before a drudgery, its most congenial employment—evincing, that, as to be in Christ is to have no condemnation, so to be in Christ is to become a new creature, with whom all old things are done away, and all things have become new!" Here is the legitimate influence of this doctrine, as felicitously expressed, as it is faithfully transcribed from the oracles of God! And when this influence is not felt in the heart, and exhibited in the life, we are warranted to infer that this doctrine is not scripturally embraced. To all my beloved brethren in the ministry I would, therefore, humbly but earnestly suggest the importance of reminding the flocks committed to their charge, in this age of wide-spread and high-sounding profession, that though they could speak with the eloquence of angels on religious subjects, and fully understood all the mysteries of the Gospel-scheme, and yet did not possess that inward and operative principle of divine and sanctifying love, which alone can assimilate them to the character of that God, who is love,

and whose name is holy, and alone can meeten them for the enjoyment of that Heaven, which is the abode of perfect love, and perfect purity, all their knowledge, and all their eloquence. would be nothing worth; and that a professed trust in the atoning sacrifice and meritorious righteousness of God, our Saviour, however firm the confidence with which it is cherished, or however rapturous the feelings with which it is accompanied, must be either hypocrisy, or self-delusion, if it want that seal of the Spirit which is the infallible mark of a saving faith, even the impress of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, and without which no created being could find happiness, (could he, compatibly with the glory of God's character, be admitted there,) even in the very heart of Heaven.

H. W.

Laurel Hill, June 15th, 1840.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THAT there has been recently a remarkable revival in religion, in this country, is a fact, which cannot have escaped the notice of the most careless observer of what is passing around us, and which must awaken the warmest gratitude and joy in all who love the Saviour, and are convinced that the Gospel is indeed designed and fitted to bring "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will amongst men."

It cannot, at the same time, be denied, that a result, whose consequences, when viewed in the light of eternity, are indeed appalling, has accompanied the increased spread of religious knowledge and religious excitement in our day.

The proclamation of the Gospel-message of salvation, in its unfettered freeness, and unadulterated simplicity, has become so extended, that comparatively few can remain theoretically ignorant of the ground of a sinner's acceptance with God. Evangelical religion has, if I may be allowed the expression, become fashionable. It ranks, among its votaries, many of the intellectual and the high-born in the land. Thus,

in some measure, the offence of the Cross has ceased; and numbers are tempted to adopt the sentiments, and phraseology of an evangelical creed, without having previously counted the cost, or felt in their souls the power of the principles which they profess!

Thus, what religion has gained in diffusion, it has lost in depth. An *unpractical* profession of evangelical views has alarmingly gained ground. The distinction, once so broadly marked, between the world and the church of Christ, has been broken down; so that many, who remain in their hearts the votaries of the former, are seen enlisted in the ranks of the latter; the language of the children of God on their lips, but the seal of His Spirit unstamped upon their life. They appear to consider their claim to the title and privileges of the believer unquestionable, because they *professedly* renounce altogether any dependence on any righteousness of their own, and acknowledge that they repose an undivided trust in the Redeemer's; while they evidence, too plainly, by their palpable want of consistent conformity to His character, or devotedness to His service, that their professed faith is not a living, a *sanctifying* faith, and therefore has not been

wrought in them by the operation of God the Holy Ghost!

To contribute my mite of assistance towards exposing the unscriptural character, and ruinous consequences, of such a heartless and unhallowed profession of religion, has been my object in the following work, which the present circumstances of the visible church of Christ suggested to my mind, as not unsuitable to the peculiar characteristics of much of the religious profession of our day.

As my subject necessarily led me to insist prominently on practical views of the Gospel—on evangelical holiness—or, in other words, conformity to the character of Christ, and a consistent course of obedience and devotedness, as evidences of a saving faith in the divine righteousness of the Redeemer, I think it desirable (in order to guard my meaning, as much as possible, from being mistaken) to observe, that in pressing these evidences, as indispensable criteria of a saving faith, I consider myself as addressing those, who *profess* to have found peace with God, through the *only* scriptural ground of a sinner's justification, even the infinitely meritorious sufferings and righteousness of God's well-beloved Son; and in whom, there-

fore, the fruits of such a professed faith may legitimately be expected to be found. I advert to this, lest any one should connect, with any expressions I may have used, an altogether erroneous impression which would delay, even for a moment, the believer's enjoyment of the peace of God! It cannot be too distinctly stated, or abidingly remembered, that the sinner, who comes to Jesus, is entitled to an humble yet assured hope of pardon, and acceptance with God, *the very moment* when he is united, by faith, to the Redeemer; and is not obliged to wait till that faith has brought forth fruit for some length of time, before he is privileged to have peace with God. To deny that he is entitled to the enjoyment of that peace, till his faith has continued for some time to work by love, is an opinion utterly at variance with the whole constitution of the Gospel scheme, (which warrants the sinner, *as soon* as ever he believes on Jesus, *immediately*, being justified by faith, to have peace with God, and go on his heavenward way rejoicing,) and is equally prejudicial to the Saviour's glory, and the believer's peace!

Still, (while gladly admitting that the humble, penitent sinner is as fully warranted to rejoice

in God, as his covenant-God, the moment when the Holy Ghost first leads him to repose a cordial trust in the Saviour, as in any subsequent period of his Christian career,) we have a right to call on every *professor* of an evangelical creed, "who *saith, I know Him, and abide in Him,*" to evidence the sincerity of his profession, by the apostolical test—"walking, even as Jesus walked"—and to prove, both to himself and others, the vitality of his faith, by the fruits of righteousness and true holiness which it bears, and which incontestably proclaim, that it has been implanted in his heart by the Holy Ghost!

The plan adopted in the following work is simply this:—To endeavour to expose the unscriptural and soul-destroying character of Antinomianism—to point out some of the causes that may have contributed to its prevalence, and some of the correctives that may tend to check its progress—and to suggest some hints, which may assist the real Christian in so running the race set before him in the Gospel, as to adorn the doctrine of "God, our Saviour," in all things, and to be conformed to His image, in the beauty of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord!

I would now commit this little work to the indulgent perusal and earnest prayers of those, who know that the humblest instrumentality can be made effectual, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to the advancement of a Saviour's glory! And if it should be made the means, through His blessing, of awakening but one ungodly professor from his fatal dream, and leading him to pray fervently for the forgiveness of his past insults to the divine Redeemer, through His atoning blood, and for the sanctifying influences of the Blessed Spirit, to renew him in the divine image; or of inducing but one sincere follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has not hitherto lived up to his exalted privileges, to walk more worthy of his high and holy calling, treading more closely in his divine Master's footsteps, and living more consistently and devotedly to His glory—I shall, indeed, feel abundantly rewarded for all my labour, and shall most gratefully rejoice, that so high an honour has been put on this humble effort to advance the Saviour's cause, while unreservedly giving all the praise to Him, to whom undividedly it is due!

H. W.

Laurel Hill. March 20th, 1839.

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CHAPTER I.

THE SPIRIT OF ANTINOMIANISM.

ANTINOMIANISM—by which I mean such a professed trust in the Redeemer's righteousness, for acceptance with God, as leaves its possessor unconcerned about, and destitute of that "holiness, without which," Scripture assures us, "no man shall see the Lord"—is such a monstrous abuse of the doctrines of free grace, and such a frightful perversion of the design of the blessed Gospel, that one might have supposed that even Satan himself, with all his subtlety and skill, could not have persuaded any of the professors of that religion, which emanated from a holy God, and is designed to lead to a holy heaven, to embrace and advocate a system, so directly opposed to the very purpose, for which the Divine Author of Christianity visited our earth.

To suppose that that God, whose name is holy—and whose perfect holiness is the very essence of His own happiness and glory, would arrange such a stupendous system of machinery as Christianity unfolds, for the express purpose of dispensing with the necessity of holiness, in any of His intelligent creatures, is assuredly the very acme of self-evident absurdity, and appalling blasphemy. Yet, scarcely had the first preachers of the Gospel begun to proclaim the glad tidings of a free and full salvation through the blood of the cross, when this monstrous heresy sprung up; and that exclusive trust in the alone meritorious righteousness of the Saviour, which was declared by the Apostles to constitute the essence of saving faith, but, at the same time, was declared by them to be the most powerful promoter of the love and life of holiness, in all who cordially embraced it, was perverted into a plea for "continuing in sin, that grace might abound." Thus was the hope of salvation blasphemously maintained to be compatible with the indulgence of sin; yea, grace was represented as being, by this means, more gloriously magnified, because its entire independency of human merit, in man's salvation, was more triumphantly displayed: and

thus was the holy Jesus represented as the most powerful patron of sin, that had ever appeared upon earth!

Nor have there been wanting those, since the apostolic days, who have systematized a sentiment, which offers such a frightful affront to the Divine Founder of our faith. For there have been those, professing and calling themselves Christians, who, under the pretence of giving the undivided glory of man's salvation to the Saviour, have maintained the blasphemous opinion, that the Redeemer has fulfilled all righteousness on behalf of His people, in *such a sense*, as to release them from the necessity of obedience to the divine law, in *any point of view*, and thus to allow them to cherish a confident hope of acceptance with God, on the ground of the Saviour's imputed righteousness, though sin be reigning, unmortified and unresisted, in their heart and life.

Thus the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer—which, when scripturally understood, and cordially embraced, through the divine teaching of the Holy Spirit, is at once the foundation of a believer's peace, and the instrument of his sanctification, and emphatically entitles the Gospel to be called

indeed, glad tidings of great joy—becomes, by this perversion of its gracious design, the source of a delusive and destructive hope of salvation, and the spring of all unrighteousness and ungodliness, in principle and practice!

In our own day, this blasphemous perversion of evangelical truth, is not, perhaps to any great extent, systematically professed or preached; but even when the doctrines of Antinomianism are not openly professed, the leaven of Antinomianism may be secretly at work. And when we look at the general aspect of the professing Christian Church, one cannot but be compelled to fear, that the *spirit* of this soul-destroying heresy is extensively abroad, and, wearing the specious guise of evangelical religion, is luring thousands of unsuspecting victims to their everlasting destruction.

So palpable is this melancholy fact, that a late celebrated commentator, the Rev. T. Scott, warmly attached to moderate Calvinistic views, wrote his commentary on the Scriptures in such a prominently practical strain, that it has been remarked, "that it would seem, as if, while he was writing it, the genius of Antinomianism was stalking before his eyes." And the most distinguished advocates of evangelical truth, in

our day, appear increasingly to feel the necessity of adopting a more practical style of preaching, and insisting more frequently and fully on the sanctifying nature of saving faith.

It is of great importance to distinguish, as we have observed, between the open profession, and the secret leaven, of Antinomian doctrine. There are few, perhaps, if any, in our day, exhibiting any evidences of an interest on the subject of religion, who would deliberately avow such a sentiment as this: "I believe that the Divine Saviour perfectly obeyed the law of God, as my Surety, in my stead. In His perfect obedience I undividedly trust, and *therefore* I feel myself quite at liberty to follow the bent of every sinful passion, to indulge in every unchristian temper, and to neglect every commandment of God. Nor is my hope of salvation at all shaken by such a course of conduct; because it is the Redeemer's perfect righteousness, and not any polluted righteousness of my own, on which I ground my confident assurance of acceptance with God."

But while few, if any, who call themselves Christians, in our day, would avowedly adopt such language, are there not, we fear, multitudes of self-deceived professors, who are acting

in its spirit? Who cherish and express an undoubting assurance of acceptance, on the ground of their trust in the Redeemer's meritorious righteousness, while exhibiting in their character and life, a palpable want of any approach to conformity with the character and life of Christ.

Wherever this is the case—wherever an individual, *because* the ground of his acceptance is professedly the Redeemer's righteousness, and not his own, and therefore he feels secure of his salvation, independently of any works of righteousness he can perform, wilfully and habitually neglects any duty the Gospel enjoins, or indulges any temper the Gospel forbids; that individual, let him call himself by what name he may, is an Antinomian in heart—he is turning the grace of God into licentiousness, and making Christ the minister of sin.

The same guilt is incurred, whenever a professed trust in the imputed righteousness of the Son of God is regarded as a substitute for, instead of a stimulant to, the most zealous and unwearied efforts in the pursuit of personal holiness. For, whenever the belief, (though scriptural to the fullest extent,) that salvation is altogether of free grace, conduces to less constant watchfulness, solicitude, and exertion for the

attainment of the highest degree of sanctification attainable on earth, than (were an individual in earnest about his eternal welfare,) might be expected to result, and has, in numerous instances, actually resulted, from the erroneous belief, that heaven can be purchased by our own works—there the poison of this pestilential heresy is to be found exerting its deadly influence, to the deep dishonour of a Saviour's name, and the deeper injury to the soul, where its malignant venom lurks.

Now, can we look round us on what is called the religious world in our day, and not be constrained to admit, that, if this be true, the spirit of Antinomianism is indeed busy there? Do we not there see multitudes, ostensibly enlisted in the ranks of the faithful followers of the Lamb—perhaps even actively engaged in carrying on the work of the Lord—who, if we may judge by the testimony of their lips, have not the smallest degree of doubt as to their own safety, but of whom, judging by the testimony of their lives, as compared with the standard of the Gospel, we are compelled greatly to stand in doubt?

When we hear them speak, we are ready with joy to cry out,—here assuredly is the love of

Christ, reigning in this heart; but when we see the development of their characters, in the daily duties and trials of domestic life, we are forced with sorrow to exclaim—oh, where is the image of Christ, stamped upon this soul?

In truth, it is melancholy to reflect, on what a small stock of religious capital an individual may set up, and be unhesitatingly recognized as a sincere and devoted Christian in our day.

A profession of the utter renunciation of all dependance on any righteousness of their own, and of undivided and undoubting trust in the Redeemer's—the adoption of a peculiar system of opinions, and set of phrases, (the Shibboleth of a party,) whose technicalities are very fluently repeated, but their meaning not very distinctly understood—and a zealous attendance on some favourite evangelical ministry, where attention to the message is merged in admiration of the man, and praising the preacher is substituted for practising his precepts. Such, alas! is the slender stock of spiritual wealth, on the strength of which, we fear, many have gained for themselves a high name and standing, in the professing church, in the present day. Let it not be supposed, that these observations are made in a spirit of uncharitable or unkind censorious-

ness; oh no! but in an earnest and affectionate desire to endeavour to expose and check a system of religious profession, which is deplorably prevalent, and is alike dishonourable to the Saviour, and destructive to the soul by which it is embraced.

It is too obvious, indeed, to admit of concealment, (even were it desirable,) that a superficial style of religion, (if one may so call it,) has of late years been gaining ground, fraught with the most disastrous influence on the interests of vital Christianity.

Speculative, instead of practical—delighting immeasurably more in the discussion of doctrines, than the discharge of duty—it excites the imagination, rather than hallows the affections—floats through the head, rather than settles in the heart—and dwells upon the lips, more than regulates the life. The crucifixion of sin, in the inmost recesses of the soul—the attainment of the highest degree of holiness, of which, through the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit, our renewed nature is capable, while on earth—the moulding of the temper and disposition, the entire character and conduct, into a close conformity with the Saviour's;—these, we regret to say, are not the distinguishing charac-

teristics of a vast proportion of the religious profession of our day.

The consequences are, as might be expected, deplorable in the extreme. One melancholy result, in particular, I would briefly notice, in the humble hope, that the voice of affectionate warning may not be lifted up altogether in vain.

Multitudes of immortal souls are thus deceived as to their real state before God, and, wrapt up in a presumptuous confidence of safety, are hastening onward to eternal destruction. They buoy themselves up with flattering and fallacious hopes of that heaven, to which they imagine they have a title, founded on the Redeemer's righteousness; while, in point of fact, by their want of meetness for its holy society, pursuits, and pleasures, they are essentially incapacitated for the enjoyment of its happiness. So that, even if God should violate in their favour the immutable laws of His moral government, and admit them, in this unsanctified state, into heaven, unless the whole constitution of heaven itself were changed, they could not in the very nature of things, enjoy one moment's heartfelt happiness, even in that abode of pure and perfect bliss.

There is nothing which gives one a more fearful idea of the depth of Satan's subtlety, and the appalling danger, to which we are consequently exposed, from the attacks of this ever-watchful enemy of our souls, than his power of suiting his snares and stratagems for deceiving, and thus destroying his victims, with the most skilful adaptation, to the peculiar circumstances in which he finds them placed.

When darkness and deadness, in spiritual things, almost universally prevailed, it was the policy and plan of this wily serpent, to keep his victims wholly engrossed by the objects of time and sense, and buried in a profound sleep of utter apathy about the concerns of their immortal souls. But no sooner had a remarkable revival of religion taken place—no sooner had the ministers of the Gospel begun to proclaim faithfully the message of salvation, through the blood of the cross—to expatiate, with affectionate earnestness, on the glorious theme of a Redeemer's love—to lift up the blazing torch of revelation over the abyss of eternity, and thus unveil the joys of heaven, and the horrors of hell—and, sounding a loud peal of awakening alarm in the ears of slumbering sinners, to cry out, "What meanest thou, oh sleeper! arise

and call upon thy God!" no sooner had this change taken place in the circumstances of the Church of Christ, than Satan, ever watching, with attentive eye, every variation of its eventful history, began immediately to suit his schemes and suggestions to this changed state of affairs in the Christian Church.

With multitudes he could no longer succeed, in keeping them fast asleep in the torpor of spiritual apathy, that fearful precursor of eternal death. The light of Gospel truth was flashing, with too dazzling a splendour—the trumpet of Gospel invitation was sounding, with too loud a blast, around his victims, to allow them to sleep on, in the death-like slumber, in which he had so long kept them bound. They were startled out of this sleep of death, into a state of awakened solicitude about the things belonging to their eternal peace! They could not any longer remain utterly forgetful of *His* claims on their gratitude and love, who, they were so frequently reminded, had manifested for them, on Calvary's cross, a love, which, indeed, passeth all knowledge. The visions of eternity were too often and too powerfully presented to their view, to permit of their any longer remaining contentedly unconcerned about their ever-

lasting destiny. They could not help feeling, that it *was* a matter of some interest and importance to themselves, whether they should spend eternity in heaven or in hell; and the question began to burst forth from many a startled sinner—"What must I do to be saved?"

Here then the skill of Satan was pre-eminently displayed, in fostering a system of religious profession, with enough of the semblance of scriptural truth to tranquillize the conscience, but not enough of its reality to save the soul. A system, which under pretence of leading the sinner to cast the crown of salvation, with self-renouncing humility, at the Redeemer's feet, would leave Satan's dominion in the sinner's heart altogether unsubdued; and would thus supply his alarmed conscience with an opiate, to lull its fears to rest, and plunge him into a sleep, more dangerous than that from which he had been startled, because one, out of which it would be more difficult, humanly speaking, for even the loudest blast of the Gospel trumpet ever to awaken him again.

Satan has been himself in heaven. He knows that the essential, the altogether indispensable qualification for the enjoyment of its happiness,

is to have the love of heaven's God enthroned, with undivided supremacy, in the heart—and a congeniality with the mind and will of God, pervading every feeling and faculty of the soul. He knows that where these are wanting, there is nothing in heaven itself, nothing in its society or its scenery, that is capable of rendering an unholy spirit happy.

He has not forgotten, that once the principle of loyalty to God was dethroned from his own heart, and that of rebellion against his Divine Sovereign reigned in its stead, that moment happiness fled from him, and has been a stranger to his spirit ever since; and, inasmuch as this principle of rebellion will never be subdued within his soul, happiness must be a stranger there, throughout eternity.

Hence it is, that this malignant spirit, who cannot bear the sight of human happiness, when flowing from what he knows to be its only true and unfailing source, even the love and likeness of a holy God, directs all his energies to prevent awakened sinners from heartily desiring, and honestly following after, that holiness, without which, he is well aware, they can never see the Lord, so as to derive satisfying happiness from the sight.

He cares not how correct may be the system, or how clear the views of divine truth, which they embrace—he cares not how fluent may be their utterance, or how zealous their advocacy, of evangelical doctrine—he cares not how rapturous may be their feelings, how burning their zeal, how abundant their labours, or how confident their hopes, *so long as* he sees that a supreme love to God, and a supreme desire after holiness, are not the reigning affections of their heart, and the regulating principles of their life. He knows that the superstructure of Christian hope, whose foundation is *apparently* resting on the Redeemer's righteousness, but which does not bear inscribed on its walls and pillars, "holiness unto the Lord," though it may tower, in the imagination of the self-deceived professor, as high as heaven, shall eventually be cast down into hell. He knows, by his own experience, that the faith, which does not sanctify, cannot save—that the knowledge of the truth, which does not make the spirit meet for heaven, will never guide it there. And, therefore, he fears no faith, but that which worketh by love, to the keeping of God's commandments—no hope, but that which leads its possessor to purify himself, even as Christ, on whom it rests, is

pure. Yea, we doubt not, this accursed spirit feels a peculiar degree of diabolical delight, in propping up the false and fatal hopes of those, who, like himself, clearly know the way of salvation, but with whom, as with himself, this knowledge exercises no sanctifying influence, neither rekindling in them the love, nor renewing them in the image, of the holy God.

There is every reason to conclude, that Satan perfectly understands the whole scheme of man's salvation—is perfectly convinced of the Deity of Jesus, and the all-sufficiency of His atonement, and that there is no other name under heaven, whereby sinners can be saved. Yet, with all this clearness of speculative knowledge, and intellectual conviction of the truth, remaining unsanctified, he must for ever remain unsaved. Continuing unholy, he *must* continue unhappy, *for ever.*

Oh! what a peal of alarm should this awful fact sound in the ears of every unsanctified professor of the Gospel, who may be priding himself on the clearness of his views of divine truth, and the confidence of his hopes of the divine favour, while exhibiting, both to the eye of God and man, a palpable want of compliance with the will, and conformity to the character of God!

And how should it stir up all, who name the name of Christ, to the most searching self-examination, as to the influence of the doctrines they have embraced—the fruits of the faith which they profess—lest all their knowledge of divine truth should but resemble Satan's, and therefore leave them, like him, for ever exposed to the wrath, and exiled from the presence, of the holy blessed God! For if their belief be like Satan's, what can they hope, but that it should lead them to be the everlasting partakers of his doom?

To every professor of an evangelical creed in our day I would also observe, what an awful proof that an enlightened understanding, and a convinced judgment, on religious subjects, are perfectly compatible with an unrenewed heart, does the history of Balaam supply! How clear were his views! How strong his convictions! How emphatical his expressions of reverence for the authority and word of Him, whom he calls "the Lord his God!" How fervent appears his desire to "die the death of the righteous," and in his last end, to be like the people of God!—Yet what *was* the death he did die? The death of a rebel against God, slain, as there is reason to believe, in the very act of fighting on the side of the enemies of God!

Oh! with what tremendous solemnity of warning does such a history proclaim to you, that your views of divine truth may be clear, your convictions strong, your conversation evangelical, and your wish to be at last numbered with the people of God most fervent—and yet, like Balaam, it may be your melancholy doom to see the Saviour, but *not nigh*—not as your own Saviour, but to behold Him, even as the rich man in hell beheld Abraham, afar off; and thus to perish everlastingly amongst the enemies of God! Examine then carefully, whether your religious attainments are, after all, only such as Balaam's were—and whether, therefore, with all your knowledge, convictions, professions, and desires, you can only hope, at last, that your destiny for eternity will be like his!

Look again at Judas! He was a professed follower of the Son of God—he conversed with the Saviour face to face—he was honoured with peculiar marks of His favour—yea, he was an Apostle—*yet* he was a traitor! And what was *his* end?—Oh read, and tremble, and search well, and pray fervently that the Holy Spirit may assist you in the search, lest there be treachery to the Saviour lurking in *your* heart—and so, amidst all your boasted knowledge, and high-sounding

profession, your character be branded in His sight with a traitor's guilt, and your end shall therefore be a traitor's doom!

And if ever, since the apostolic age, there was a period in which this caution was imperatively called for, it is that in which we live—in which the preaching of evangelical doctrine has become so prevalent, that comparatively few can remain speculatively unacquainted with the way of salvation—and the profession of evangelical religion has become so fashionable, that multitudes are exposed to the danger of enlisting in its ranks, without having previously felt the power of the principles they profess!

I have thought, therefore, that I might profitably employ the leisure time which exclusion, by my state of health, from the active duties of the ministry affords me, in endeavouring to point out the ruinous results of this unsanctifying style of religious profession, so deeply leavened with the Christ-dishonouring, soul-destroying poison of Antinomianism. I would also endeavour to animate the sincere followers of the Lord Jesus Christ to the most faithful discharge of every Christian duty, and the most careful cultivation of every Christian temper, by which the doctrines of God their Saviour may be adorned and

advanced—and to suggest to them a few simple, affectionate hints, by which I would earnestly desire, under the divine blessing, to assist them in their efforts to attain the prize of their high calling in Christ Jesus, even the complete conquest over every sinful appetite and lust, and the perfect sanctification of their souls, by their entire subjugation to the will, and conformity to the character, of a holy God.

The system, (be it then remembered,) against which I would desire to lift up my warning voice, is that which perverts the very doctrine, which is the essential glory of the Gospel scheme, and the alone scriptural foundation of all a believer's hopes—namely, that our acceptance with God rests *exclusively* on the merits of the Son of God, and, in no measure or degree, on any doings or deservings of our own. A system, which perverts this glorious and most comfortable doctrine into an encouragement, either to indulge in sin, or to be less zealous in the pursuit of holiness, than if our acceptance depended on our own works, and heaven was to be the reward of our own obedience. Whenever, in fact, we act in *such* a manner, as if we conceived that the design of God in making our acceptance to rest on the righteousness of

His dear Son, and not our own, was to exonerate us from the obligation of rendering the most cordial and constant obedience to His holy laws, we act, as I before observed, in the very spirit of Antinomianism, however we may professedly abhor its abominations, and declaim against its destructive creed.

I would therefore point out some of the monstrous absurdities and blasphemies, which such a sentiment involves—that we may earnestly pray to be kept, by the power of God, the Holy Ghost, at the greatest distance from any approach, not merely to the avowed belief, but even to the secret insinuations, of a principle, which more perhaps than any other exhibits the fearful extent of the permitted power of Satan over the souls of men, in leading them to turn God's choicest blessings into the deadliest curse, and, under the pretence of honouring Him, to offer the deepest possible insult to His well-beloved Son.

Before, however, I proceed to this exposition, as I am aware how congenial is a spirit of self-righteousness to the pride of our fallen nature, and how reluctant we are, even when renewed by divine grace, entirely to relinquish all claims on any modification of merit, in the work of our

salvation, I think it advisable to advert to the plain and positive announcement of Scripture, that the salvation of a sinner, from the first dawn of grace opening on his soul in this world, to the full blaze of glory that shall burst upon his spirit in the next, is altogether of free, undeserved grace—without the smallest admixture of any, even the least degree of meritoriousness, on the sinner's part. That it is utterly impossible that the believer's dependance on the Redeemer's sacrifice and righteousness can be too free from any leaven of the pharisaical principle of self-righteousness, or self-dependance—and that nothing of our own, whether in the way of service or suffering, of repentance or reformation, of faith or holiness, is to be added to, or mixed up with, what can alone constitute the ground of a sinner's acceptance with a holy God, even "the obedience unto death" of His well-beloved Son, which brought in an everlasting righteousness, "which is unto all and upon all them, that truly believe on Him."

Yes—it cannot be too constantly remembered, or too frequently enforced, that in the matter of justification, the Redeemer's glorious work of redemption, of which He Himself declared, with His expiring lips, "It is finished," forms

the alone basis, on which a believer can build his hopes of pardon, and peace with God. The moment when the Holy Spirit unites a sinner to the Saviour by a living faith, that moment he is privileged to rejoice in the God of his salvation, and to possess an interest in all the blessings of the everlasting covenant—since the *only* title, by which he can claim an inheritance among the saints in light, is founded on the Saviour's merits, and written in the Saviour's blood. And therefore the longest life of the most unwearied devotedness to His service, and the closest conformity to His character, that ever was attained on earth, does not add one particle of increased value to that title in Jehovah's sight, or place the believer on any different footing, as to the meritorious ground of his hopes of salvation, from that on which he stood, when, at the commencement of his Christian career, he first flung himself, in humble penitence, at the foot of the cross, crying out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

We feel it to be of supreme importance to keep this truth ever in view, because the spirit of self-righteousness is continually insinuating itself, even into the humblest and most established believer's soul, and is at once peculiarly prejudicial to his progress in sanctification, and

peculiarly displeasing to the Saviour, as tending to rob Him of part of the glory of that work, which He travelled, in the greatness of His strength, and the depth of His humiliation, to accomplish, and which He will not stoop to share with the sinners whom He died to save. The undivided glory of that work must therefore be given to Him! An undivided dependance on His infinitely meritorious obedience and sufferings must be abidingly maintained—and incessant watchfulness observed, lest imperceptibly we begin to build our hopes, in any measure, on any progress in holiness of heart, or devotedness of life, which the Holy Spirit may have enabled us to attain.

Nothing but this absolute renunciation of all trust in our own righteousness, (could we even arrive at a greater height of holiness, than ever before was attained by mortal man,) and this simple reliance on the righteousness of Him who is "the Lord our Righteousness," can qualify us to render, while on earth, acceptable service to Him, who has bought us with His own blood; or to take part in heaven, with all the company of His redeemed, in that song of grateful praise, which, while casting their crowns, in self-renouncing adoration, at His feet, they shall lift

up before His throne, and cry, "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive honour, and glory, and blessing, and power. Therefore, unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even the Father, unto Him be praise and glory, for ever and ever! Amen! and amen!"

But while we feel this to be indeed a truth of paramount importance, we feel it to be no less so, that the faith, which thus reposes with unmixed reliance on the Redeemer's righteousness, must be a faith, which worketh by love, to the purifying of the heart, and keeping the commandments. For though holiness be no part of our title for heaven, it is the very essence of meetness for it, without which the title, or even the possession would, so far as our happiness is concerned, be utterly in vain. Therefore the proudest pharisee, that ever arrogantly trusted, with the most presumptuous confidence, in his own merits, is not more disqualified for taking part in the song, or services, of the redeemed in heaven, than is the unholy professor of the most thoroughly evangelical creed, however high his hopes, or loud his boast, of his assurance

of acceptance, and a title to an inheritance of eternal glory—

For none shall reach that blissful place,
Or heaven's unclouded glory see,
Who talks of free and sovereign grace,
Unless that grace has made him free!

One word more of caution I would desire to add, before I proceed to the proposed plan, to guard against misapprehension, if ever I should inadvertently be betrayed into any expressions, which might appear to countenance the unscriptural tenet, that our own services, however self-denying, or our own holiness, however advanced, are to be, in even the smallest conceivable degree, rested upon, as forming any part of the ground of our acceptance, or of the title by which, if believers, we are privileged to claim an interest in all the unsearchable riches and glory of that inheritance, which it cost the Son of God the price of His own blood to purchase for His people. Should this be so, I would most earnestly entreat the Christain reader to remember, that the words, if capable of such an interpretation, were never intended to support a doctrine, so utterly subversive of the very foundation of

a sinner's hopes—so awfully calculated to rob the Saviour of His prerogative, and obscure His glory.

Again would I repeat my fullest conviction of the truth of that scriptural article of our scriptural Church, (which Luther well declared to be the article of a standing or a falling Church,) which sets forth that "we are accounted righteous before God, *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." Oh yes, assuredly, very full of comfort, indeed! For it enables the humble penitent believer to rest his hopes of pardon on a ground, which promotes the glory of God; and to combine, with the deepest sense of his own utter unworthiness, the most exalted anticipations of covenant blessings, and eternal glory. For what glory can be too great, what blessings too precious, for him to expect, when the ground on which *alone* he hopes that the Everlasting Father will bestow them, is, as the recompence of the sufferings, the reward of the righteousness, of His own dear Son! How beautifully is the same glorious truth exhibited in those oft quoted lines of the poet of Chris-

tianity, which embody the very essence of the doctrine I would desire to uphold :—

All joy to the believer! he can speak—
Trembling, yet happy—confident, yet meek!
" Since the dear hour, that brought me to Thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but Thine,
Nor hoped, but in Thy righteousness divine!
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child—
Howe'er performed, it was their brightest part,
That they proceeded from a grateful heart.
Cleansed in Thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good—
I cast them at Thy feet—my only plea
Is, what it was, dependance upon Thee!
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never failed—nor shall it fail me now."
Angelic gratulations rend the skies—
Pride falls unpitied, never more to rise—
Humility is crowned—and Faith receives the prize!

CHAPTER II.

THE IMPIETY OF ANTINOMIANISM.

Having thus, I trust, guarded my meaning from being misunderstood, I would now proceed to point out some of the blasphemous opinions, involved in the assertion, that our dependance on the Redeemer's righteousness for acceptance was designed to supersede the necessity of personal holiness, and persevering obediénce to God's commandments.

I.—Such a doctrine offers the most daring affront to the character of God, viewed as the Moral Governor of the universe.

In this view, it represents Him as originally creating man in His own image, in righteousness and true holiness,—giving him laws for the regulation of his conduct, and requiring from him obedience to those laws, as the test of his loyalty and his love to his Divine Creator, Benefactor, and King.

Man disobeys the command of God, and thus incurs His righteous displeasure—loses at once the divine image, and the divine favour; and both by a just sentence of condemnation, and by the inherent corruption of his own nature, is excluded from, and unfitted for, the enjoyment of the presence of his offended and holy God. Now what, according to the Antinomian scheme, is God's plan for reinstating fallen man in the divine favour, and re-admitting him to the everlasting enjoyment of the divine presence?

He sends His own, His only Son—one with Himself, in all the essential glory of the Godhead, into this rebellious and ruined world, to take our nature upon Him, and accomplish man's redemption—but how, according to this monstrous heresy? By obeying the holy law of God, and enduring all the awful penalties, denounced against the transgression of its righteous demands, for the express purpose, that, through the meritorious obedience and satisfaction of their Divine Surety, all who *profess* to trust exclusively in this (the only scriptural) ground of acceptance, may be restored to the divine favour, and admitted into heaven, *although* the principle of love to God be not re-enthroned in their hearts, and the features of the divine

image be not re-stamped on their souls, and obedience to the divine commands be not the habitual tenor of their lives. Is not this to represent God, as making the obedience of His dear Son a ground and sanction for the disobedience of His people—an encouragement to their continuance in a state of rebellion against His authority, and transgression of His laws? Does it not exhibit Jehovah as contriving a most stupendous system of divine arrangements, (intended, we are told, to manifest His wisdom, love, and power most gloriously,) for the very purpose of enabling His rebellious subjects to insult Him with impunity; and, while trampling on the laws, which, as the Moral Governor of the universe, He has prescribed for the maintenance of righteousness in His dominions, to bask in the sunshine of His smile, and participate in all the honors of His kingdom.

Could human language express—yea, could Satanic impiety suggest, a more horrible insult to the divine character than this?

Were *this* the true view of the Gospel scheme of salvation, it would be indeed a mystery, but not a "mystery of godliness"—not such a mystery, as the holy angels could desire to look into, with feelings of devout delight, and affectionate adoration.

What indignation must such an insult to Jehovah excite in those blessed spirits, who worship Him in the beauty of holiness, and express the very ground of their adoration and love, when they cast their crowns before His throne, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy!" With what deep abhorrence must *they* regard a scheme, which exhibits the Holy One as the patron of unholiness —the Almighty Sovereign of the inhabitants of heaven, as encouraging rebellion in His subjects on earth—and the Righteous Governor of the universe as providing, at an immense cost—yea, even by the sacrifice of His well-beloved Son—for the unpunished, the *rewarded* violation of His own laws.

It may almost appear superfluous to expose the mingled absurdity and impiety of such an imputation on the character of Him, whose name is holy; but such is the very essence of Antinomianism, when arranged into a systematic scheme of doctrine. And such is the tendency of all professed trust in the Redeemer's righteousness, which does not stimulate its possessor to follow after holiness with unwearied zeal, and to abound in every work and labour of love, by which that Redeemer's glory may be advanced.

How anxiously, then, should all who profess

to be reposing, with unshaken confidence, on this alone scriptural foundation of a sinner's hopes, search and examine themselves, with a godly jealousy, to see whether their professed faith is bringing forth those fruits of righteousness and true holiness, of obedience to the Saviour's commandments, and conformity to His character, which are the inseparable concomitants, and therefore, infallible evidences of a true and living faith; and which decisively prove it to be of a divine original, wrought in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost. For as long as the character of God remains unchanged, as long as He continues to be the God "who loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity," so long must it be regarded by Him as the very deepest affront, that can be offered to His Majesty, to insinuate that His design, in putting forward the righteousness of His dear Son, as the exclusive ground of a sinner's acceptance before Him, was to release His creatures from the obligations of His righteous laws, from the necessity of becoming personally holy, or of rendering a loyal and loving subjection to His will, and obedience to His commandments.

II.—Another appalling consequence, which

Antinomianism involves, is, that it represents the Second Person in the Trinity, the Son of God, as undertaking the work of man's redemption, for a purpose infinitely unworthy of His character, and utterly incompatible with every view of His adorable attributes, which would entitle Him to the supreme love and veneration of all pure and holy beings throughout the universe.

What can be imagined more insulting to God's well-beloved Son, than to insinuate, that His design in leaving heaven, and visiting our earth, was to obey the commands, and endure the penalties, of His Father's law, on His people's behalf, as their Representative, in *such a sense*, as to permit them to combine the hope of salvation with the indulgence of sin; and to enable them to be received into heaven, through the merit of His righteousness, while unholy passions continue to reign, with unsubdued dominion, within their hearts.

Is it not, in truth, as fearful blasphemy as Satan himself could suggest, to assert, that *this* was the purpose, for which the Eternal Son of God laid aside his glory, and shrouding the splendour of His divine nature under a veil of flesh, clothed Himself in the garments of mortality, and endured sorrow, and suffering, and

death—even the death of the cross. *This!*—to enable His people to sin with impunity, and to continue their career of rebellion against His Father's authority; not merely without fear of the divine displeasure, but with the fullest assurances of the everlasting enjoyment of the divine love?

Is not this to represent the blessed Jesus as the minister of sin, linked in confederacy with Satan, against the cause of holiness and God?

If the Antinomian scheme were scriptural—if the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness to His people were intended, not merely to give them a title to eternal glory, which fully satisfies every requirement of Jehovah's justice, but also to release them from the obligation of obedience to His commandments, and conformity to His character, even when viewed as the fruits and evidence, not the ground, of their acceptance; where then would have been the force of our Lord's answer to the Pharisees, when they accused Him of casting out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of the devils?

How could Satan have been represented as fighting against Satan; divided against himself, and endeavouring to subvert his own kingdom,

by giving Jesus power to cast out devils, *if* the kingdom, which Jesus desired to set up, *were such* as Antinomianism would establish?

What could Satan desire, more congenial to his wishes, or more calculated to extend his influence, than the religion of the Gospel, *if* its design was to render love to God, obedience to His laws, and likeness to His image, unnecessary, in any point of view, in those who were to enjoy the favor and presence of God, throughout eternity.

Does not Satan delight in the advancement of the empire of sin—in seeing it spreading its accursed influence, more and more widely, throughout the universe? And how could a scheme be devised, more powerfully adapted to the promotion of this object, than that which Antinomianism would blasphemously set forth, as the Gospel of the grace of God?

Beyond all controversy, could it be proved to be either the avowed design, or the legitimate result, of the Gospel-scheme of salvation, to release man from the obligation of obedience to God, and to give him a title to heaven, grounded on the Saviour's merits, without a meetness for heaven, imparted by the Saviour's Spirit; this would go further to disprove the divine original

of Christianity, than all the arguments, which the sophistry of infidelity has ever yet arrayed against her claims to be a revelation from God. For it might then be argued, with unanswerable force of reasoning, how could it be imagined, that a God, whose own holiness is His essential glory, could have promulgated a system, whose purpose it was to destroy the very foundations of that holiness, which He supremely loves, and to establish the dominion of sin, that abominable thing, which He hates with infinite abhorrence.

Yet, if the Redeemer's righteousness is to be *so* confided in, that the sinner who trusts in it is thereby exonerated from, instead of stimulated to, cordial love to God, and habitual obedience to His laws, Christianity would be chargeable with that very consequence, which would disprove her claims to a divine original.

How powerfully does this consideration call upon all, who are professedly trusting in this alone meritorious ground of acceptance with God, to examine, with scrutinising jealousy, whether their professed trust be sanctifying in its influences; and whether they may indeed hope, that the Holy Spirit is the author and cherisher of their confidence in Christ, since it leads them to regard, with equal horror, turning

the grace of God into Antinomian licentiousness, and presuming, with Pharisaical pride, to attempt to share the glory of their salvation with the Son of God!

Who, that appreciates aright the character of Him, that was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," can for one moment doubt, that He feels altogether as deeply insulted by the Antinomian's abuse of His grace, as by the Pharisee's usurpation of His glory? Were I then called upon to address the language of warning expostulation to one, who seemed in danger of abusing the grace of God, I would say to that individual—You profess to trust exclusively in the Redeemer's righteousness for pardon, peace with God and everlasting glory! So far—well! The word of God commands you to cling to Him—to His all-sufficient sacrifice alone, with an undivided confidence; and to make mention before God of no righteousness but His, as the basis of all your hopes of heaven.

But come—and, with the eye of faith, contemplate Calvary's cross! And while standing at the foot of that cross, and watching the dying agonies of Him, who, you say, you believe, there expired for your sake, oh! tell me, can

you for one moment pretend to believe, that His design in exchanging the glory he had with the Father from eternity, and the adoration of the heavenly host, for the scoffs, the insults, the excruciating bodily and mental anguish, which He endured, while hanging on that cross, was to free you from the obligations of His Father's holy law; to allow you to indulge in any one sin with impunity; and, on the ground of His meritorious sacrifice, to expect an inheritance of eternal blessedness and glory, though unrenewed in the divine image, and retaining unsubdued that enmity against the blessed God, in which the very essence of meetness for hell consists. Is *this* the lesson you think he wishes you to learn from the stupendous spectacle, which Calvary's cross presents? Is the infinite hatefulness of sin so fearfully proclaimed *there* by His inconceivable agonies, in order that you may revel in its polluting gratification, unalarmed by the fear of future punishment—yea! encouraged by the prospect of a glorious recompense, to be bestowed on you for the Redeemer's sake? Has the everlasting Father written His abhorrence of iniquity in the blood of His own well-beloved Son, that you may safely indulge in what He has so awfully testified that He

infinitely hates? Did Jesus sacrifice His life, to sanction transgression; and give His people a licence to sin, in order that grace might abound—and His glory, as a Saviour, be more triumphantly displayed? Oh! blasphemy beyond compare! Is it not one of the most fearful displays of Satanic power, that he could succeed in persuading any professing Christian, who was not deranged in intellect, as well as depraved in heart, to put forward such a concentration of revolting impiety, as the revelation of a holy God!

Again, therefore, would I most solemnly urge all, who entertain and express a confident hope of acceptance, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, to ask themselves, as in the sight of Him, in whom they profess to trust, are they making that use of this glorious doctrine, which they can feel assured He wishes them to do? Does it promote purity of heart, as much as peace of conscience? Does it stimulate them to devote themselves, and all they have and are, to His service—and to walk, closely and constantly, in the blessed steps of His most holy life? Does their dependence on his atoning blood lead them to abhor and forsake the sins, to purchase pardon for which he poured out that blood? And does the zeal for the honour

of His Father's law, which He manifested by the sacrifice of Himself, to vindicate the majesty of that law, in the very act of pardoning its transgressors, does this lead them herein to follow His example, to honour Jehovah's holy law by their willing obedience to its requirements, and thus to prove that they are indeed Christ's, by drinking into His Spirit, and walking in His steps?

III.—Another monstrous absurdity, which Antinomianism involves, is, that it represents the blessed God as giving the greatest possible proof of His love for us—even giving His own Son to all the shame and agony of the death of the cross, for the purpose of releasing us from the necessity of keeping the first and great commandment, which requires us to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength! Thus, the more that God does to manifest His love for us, the less, according to this view, is it obligatory on us to cherish and exhibit obediential love to Him. And, because He has lavished on us a proof of His loving kindness, which is always spoken of in Scripture, as if it had tasked the energies of Deity itself (if we might so speak with reverence,) to the very uttermost, so that the

Almighty makes the irresistible appeal to our hearts, when pointing to the cross, on which His well-beloved Son expired for our sakes—"What could even I have done, to prove my love for you, more than I have *there* done?"—*because* the blessed God has *thus* exhausted, as it were, the inexhaustible resources of the Godhead, to convince us *how* He loved us, *therefore* we are not bound any longer to love Him with the supreme affection of undivided hearts, or to serve Him with the supreme devotion of consecrated lives!

The obedience of His dear Son is, (according to the Antinomian scheme,) in such a sense, substituted for ours, that we are under no obligation of obedience to the law, which says—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." That such self-evident impiety should ever have been put forward, as exhibiting the grace of the Gospel, is indeed almost incredible—yet Antinomianism embodies this paradox of blasphemy in its creed. 'Tis true that obedience, in the covenant of grace, is placed on a totally different footing from that which it held in the covenant of works. True, that it is not to be regarded as constituting, in the smallest de-

gree, the believer's meritorious claim or title to the favour of God, and the inheritance of heaven, but viewed as the embodied exhibition of his gratitude for the stupendous love of a Saviour-God, and the only infallible criterion, and necessary fruit, of a *living* faith in that divine righteousness of the Redeemer, whereby *alone* the believer is entitled to "an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." All this is most willingly conceded, and should ever be kept in the believer's abiding recollection, to crush the first risings of a spirit of self-righteousness, and prostrate him, in lowly, self-renouncing adoration, at his beloved Redeemer's feet. But it should be as abidingly remembered, that obedience to the first and great commandment, when viewed in this, its scriptural light, is altogether as indispensable as an undivided dependence on the righteousness of the Son of God; and that to make our professed trust in that righteousness a plea, to excuse us from the obligation of obeying the law, which calls on us to love the Lord our God supremely, is to abuse the grace of the Gospel to a purpose, the most insulting to its divine Author, which hell itself could suggest.

What, in truth, is God's uncompromising de-

mand on every child of Adam? Is it not, "Give *Me* thine heart?" What is the ground of His quarrel with our fallen race, and the fruitful source of all the sorrow and suffering, which the divine displeasure has poured out upon that earth, on which, on the morning of its creation, He looked with such fond complacency, and pronounced it good, even in His sight? Is it not, that the children of men refused to recognise this His most righteous claim, and idolatrously lavish on other objects that love, which is His just prerogative, and which, with undivided supremacy, should be centered on Himself? And was it not that when He saw that all the love He had manifested towards us in creation, preservation, and providence, had failed to win for Him the affections of our revolted hearts, that then bent on the conquest of our ingratitude, and yearning, if we may so speak, after the possession of our supreme love, He resolved on a stupendous method of winning back our alienated affections, and gave (oh! the unfathomable depths—the incomprehensible mystery of the love of God!)—gave His own, His co-eternal and co-equal Son (what *could* He give more?)—gave—*even Him*—to the death of the cross? Why? was it not, that by the overwhelming

display of divine love exhibited on that cross, our hearts, disarmed of their enmity against Him, and weaned from all idolatrous creature-love, might be led captive to the obedience of that first and great commandment; and we should be constrained, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, bringing the belief of God's love, as manifested in our redemption, overpoweringly into our souls, to love the Lord our God with our whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength?

Can there then be conceived greater absurdity or impiety, than Antinomianism involves, when it asserts, that the design of the eternal Father, in giving His well-beloved Son to the death of the cross, was thereby to accomplish a scheme of salvation for sinners, by which they might be exonerated from the obligation to love Him, with their whole hearts, and He might relinquish His claim on the supreme affections of His creatures, and leave them at liberty to lavish on idols the homage, exclusively due to Himself.

IV.—Another frightful feature of Antinomianism is, that it represents the blessed God as originally prescribing laws for the regulation of His creatures' conduct, and afterwards, at an infinite expenditure of means, involving no less than the humiliation, and sufferings, and death

of His well-beloved Son, providing for the violation of those laws, as an *invaluable privilege*, to be conferred, as a special token of His love, on the people whom He has chosen for Himself.

This must be acknowledged, as an inevitable consequence of the Antinomian scheme. The Gospel is uniformly represented as a system of peculiar, and most exalted privileges—displaying the most stupendous manifestation of divine love, the most glorious exhibition of the divine character, and the most abundant provision for the happiness of the human race! If then its design *be* to release its votaries from the obligation of obedience to the divine laws, must not this release be regarded in the light of a privilege, worthy of the character of God, and conducive to the happiness of man! And what a libel on the divine character does this supposition supply! Is it not tantamount to saying, that the laws, which God originally promulgated for the regulation of human conduct, are of *such* a nature, that it is an inestimable privilege to be exempt from rendering obedience to their requirements.

Otherwise, if the law of God be (as in truth it is) "holy, just, and good"—an emanation from His love—a transcript of His mind—if all His

commandments should be regarded as the embodied expression of His parental solicitude for the well-being and happiness of His children, then must it be self-evident, that obedience to those commandments is indispensable for their happiness. Consequently a dispensation, releasing them from such obedience, would be only a dispensation to release them from the enjoyment of true felicity—a permission to make themselves miserable, by running counter to those wise and gracious injunctions and prohibitions, which are all constructed on the principle, and for the purpose, of securing to man the highest degree of happiness, of which his nature is capable, when brought by the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, into harmony and union with the divine.

Now, without proceeding to a detailed examination of the divine commands, must it not be obvious, from the infinite perfections of the divine character, that whatever the blessed God enjoins on His creatures must be calculated to advance their real good; and therefore, that compliance with His injunctions must necessarily tend to promote their welfare and enjoyment. That in every case, and under every circumstance, obedience to God must, when

flowing from proper motives, be identified with happiness, and disobedience with misery. Could we consult either the angels in heaven, who delight to do His will, or the rebellious hosts of hell, what an overwhelming attestation would they bear to the identity, for which I plead. Or can we look at the blessed God, either in the light of a righteous Governor, or a loving Father, and hesitate for one moment to admit a truth, which would be irresistibly flashed on our conviction, by the unveiled joys of heaven, and horrors of hell? (See Deut. x. 12, 13.)

Only conceive a sovereign, enacting laws for the guidance and government of His subjects—and afterwards, on a general rebellion breaking out in his dominions, issuing a manifesto, not merely offering his rebellious subjects full pardon for the past, but also releasing them altogether from the necessity of obedience for the future. If this manifesto would be really a blessing to his people, must it not inevitably follow, that the laws, which they are thus privileged to disobey, were unjust and tyrannical—utterly unsuited to the real welfare of his subjects, and unworthy of a wise and benevolent sovereign to have promulged.

Must we not be driven to the same conclusion,

if a father were, in similar manner, to reward the disobedience of his children, by annulling the authority of the rules, which he had prescribed for the regulation of their conduct, and leaving them at liberty to transgress them, without incurring his displeasure! Surely, if this liberty would be indeed a privilege, for which they ought to be thankful, the rules, from whose authority they are thus happily released, could not have been worthy of a wise and good father to have enacted, since the happiness of his children is best promoted by their violation.

And is such the libel we will dare to pronounce on the divine commands? Yes! such we must pronounce *if* we call the Gospel a system of privileges—the most glorious God can confer—and *then* declare, as Antinomianism does, that one of those privileges is exemption from the obligation to obey the commands of the blessed God!

We can conceive indeed the indulgent sovereign, as an act of mercy, pardoning his rebellious subjects—the compassionate father, forgiving his wayward children, in the tenderness of parental love. But we feel, as it were intuitively, that if the sovereign or the father be such, as in our hearts we can reverence and love, they

must, if they would consult either their own glory, or the happiness of those, over whom they exercise authority, propose forgiveness, on such terms as will tend to re-establish in their hearts the principles of loyalty and love—and win them over to respect for the authority they have hitherto despised, and obedience to the commands they have hitherto disobeyed. And this, be it observed, is precisely what the Gospel, by the way in which it provides for the pardon of those, who embrace its merciful offers, *has* done. We feel that otherwise, forgiveness, if made to minister to rebellion against *righteous* authority, and disobedience to *gracious* commands, must prove not a blessing, but a curse! And that for a sovereign to release his subjects from loyal submission to a government, based on righteousness, and regulated by wisdom and love, or a father to release his children from filial obedience to precepts, whose sole purpose is to promote their best interests, would be an act of the deepest cruelty, which, under the pretended garb of kindness, they could possibly commit.

And is *this* what Jehovah shall be charged with? Yes! *this* it is, with which Antinomianism charges Him, when it asserts, that the righteousness of the Redeemer, is in *such* a

sense imputed to the believer, that he is thereby released from the necessity of personal obedience to the commands of God. Let us glance for a moment, somewhat more in detail, at the nature of those commands, and we shall be abundantly convinced, that such a release would be no less destructive of the happiness of man, than insulting to the glory of God!

The sum and substance of the divine commands have been condensed by Him, who best understands their spirit, for they are the emanations of His own mind, the declarations of His own will—in two short sentences, which, brief as they are in expression, are so comprehensive in extent, that there is no conceivable duty, which we can owe to God or man, which is not, as to its essential character and obligation, contained in them. These two concise, but comprehensive sentences, are, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength"—and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Yes, love to God—reverential, grateful love, pervading and sanctifying every faculty and feeling, every energy and affection, of our nature, and producing the most affectionate and

cheerful obedience to His requirements, devotedness to His service, zeal for His glory, and resignation to His will—and love to man, flowing from the divine fountain of love to God, and producing, not merely a scrupulous abstinence from every thing which can inflict on him unjustifiable injury or pain, but also a benevolent solicitude, embodied in generous and persevering exertions, to administer to the relief of his wants, and the advancement of his welfare, temporal and eternal—in a word, piety and philanthropy are the very soul of the divine law—the substance of the divine commandments. And would a release from the obligations, and influences of these heavenly principles be indeed a privilege, for which we should esteem the Gospel good tidings of great joy? Would exemption from the duties, which emanate from these principles, (containing as they do the very elements of celestial blessedness,) be a boon, worthy of God to give, and happy for man to receive? Were it not a very waste of words, to labour to prove, that every act of violation of these commands is a step of aberration from the path, where alone, by the appointment of a holy and loving God, true felicity can be found; and that that life must *necessarily* be the hap-

piest, which is most consistently regulated by these principles—most fully imbued with their spirit, and pervaded by their power.

If then a believer's trust in the Redeemer's righteousness were intended to be a *substitute* for the possession of these principles, (as Antinomianism asserts,) instead of a stimulant to the most energetic and unwearied efforts to attain to the highest degree of happiness, which obedience to these commandments can impart—in what other light could we view the Gospel, with all its boasted privileges, than as a dispensation, issuing from the court of heaven, and stamped with its seal, permitting us to be essentially and eternally miserable, by running counter to those commands, with cheerful obedience to which, when obeyed from the motives which God requires, all true happiness is, by an immutable divine appointment, inseparably linked.

For it cannot be too frequently impressed upon our inmost souls, that God has united, in a holy bond of union, never to be dissolved, grateful obedience to His commandments, with the enjoyment of heartfelt happiness—and that it is an attempt, equally absurd and impious, for man to endeavour to put asunder what God has thus

joined together; and to strive to be happy, while unreconciled in heart, and disobedient in life, to the commands of God. And most assuredly whatever else may be doubtful in theology, this at least is indisputably certain, that the object, which God's well-beloved Son designed, in exchanging the glory of His heavenly throne for the shame and sufferings of the cross, was *not* to dissolve, but to establish, on a firmer basis, the union between obedience and enjoyment, between holiness and happiness, which His Father had ordained and blest!

V.—Nor should it be omitted, that by giving such a view as Antinomianism supplies of the design of the Redeemer's sacrifice, and obedience unto death, not merely is the deepest affront offered to Him, but also to the Holy Spirit, whose glorious office, as the Sanctifier of the elect people of God, is thus entirely overlooked, or thrown into the shade.

Antinomianism proceeds on the assumption, that the *only* consequence of sin, for which the Gospel need supply a remedy, is the exposure to a sentence of eternal condemnation, in which it involves the sinner, as a transgressor of God's holy law; and that, therefore, the cancelling of this sentence, by the expiatory sufferings of

Him, who has paid the full penalty of a broken law, and perfectly satisfied its utmost requirements—and the bestowment of a title to the forfeited inheritance of eternal glory, by the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness to His believing people, are all that can be required for their complete salvation. But herein it is altogether overlooked, that there is another consequence of sin, as fearful in itself and its influences, and as indispensably requiring a suitable and sufficient remedy, even the dethronement of the love of God, and of holiness from the sinner's heart, and the predominance of a principle of enmity against God, and alienation from the precepts of His righteous law. Viewing then this twofold consequence of sin, the punishment it deserves, and the ungodliness it engenders, we see that not merely must the guilt of sin be pardoned, but the love of sin must be destroyed. Not merely must the sentence of condemnation be cancelled, but the principle of ungodliness must be subdued. Not merely must the justice of God be satisfied, but the love of God must be enthroned in the heart. And while there must be an imputation of the merit of the Redeemer's righteousness, to give the sinner a title to heaven, there must be also an imparta-

tion of the spirit of righteousness, to give him a meetness for heaven! In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit, in sanctifying the soul, is altogether as indispensable for its salvation, in the full sense of the word, as the work of the Son, in justifying the sinner, by fulfilling, as his surety, all the requirements, and enduring all the penalties, of God's holy law on his behalf.

The necessity of that glorious work, which it is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to accomplish, even re-enthroning in the sinner's heart the love, and restamping on his soul the image, of a holy God, is virtually denied by the doctrine, which would set forth the Redeemer's righteousness, as imputed to His people, in *such* a sense, as altogether to supersede the necessity of their personal holiness, in order to capacitate them for the enjoyment of a holy heaven. And thus, the deepest insult is offered to that Blessed Spirit, whose office, as the Sanctifier, as well as Comforter of the Christian, is so prominently exhibited in the Word of God.

Were nothing necessary but the imputation of the Saviour's righteousness, to render a sinner capable of enjoying the presence of a holy God, where would be the meaning of all those pas-

sages of Scripture, which represent "sanctification by the Spirit," as equally necessary with "justification by the Lord Jesus Christ," in order to the full enjoyment of the salvation of the Son of God! What, in truth, is the very essence of that salvation? Is it not full deliverance from sin in *all* its consequences—from its power, no less than its punishment—from its defilement, as well as its curse.

Was not the necessity of this union of pardon and purification typified by the stream of blood and water, which flowed from the divine Redeemer's pierced side? Did not that stream most expressively signify, that justification and sanctification are equally indispensable for the believer's complete salvation—and that for both he is equally indebted to Him, whose blood was shed for the remission of his sins, and whose Spirit is poured forth to purify his soul? Is not the cleansing stream of sanctifying grace thus set before us as flowing from the smitten Rock of our salvation equally with the fountain of atoning blood? Are not these, however in themselves distinct, thus declared to be inseparable—so that he who hopes that he is pardoned by the sprinkling of the Saviour's blood, though he continue

unpurified by the indwelling of the Saviour's Spirit, is either a hypocritical deceiver, or most fatally self-deceived.

Need we do more than glance at the character of God, and the constitution of heaven, to feel convinced, that an unsanctified soul, a soul in which the love of God is not the ruling passion, and the image of God is not stamped by the Spirit, in righteousness and true holiness, is essentially and necessarily an unhappy soul, and must be so, go where it will, throughout the boundless universe. Yea! that admission even into heaven itself could not confer a moment's happiness on such a soul, inasmuch as it could find nothing in that holy place, congenial to its sinful appetites and lusts, but every thing distasteful to its desires; and must, in its own ungodly passions, bring with it an inward hell, even into the very heart of heaven!

In truth, it is the undeniable testimony of Scripture, that indulged sin is the very element and essence of hell; that the ungodly man must have within him a hell, from which, while his character remains unchanged, he never can escape, for he carries it about with him, wander where he will—and that holiness and happiness

are so entirely identified, that God has made it equally impossible to be truly happy without being holy, or to be truly holy without being happy.

Can any doctrine then be more opposed to Scripture, or more ruinous to its victims, than that which would pervert the glorious truth, that the Redeemer's divine righteousness, imputed to His faithful followers, is their exclusive ground of justification, and title to glory, so as to lull the ungodly professors of an evangelical creed into the fatal delusion, that they are travelling heavenward, while, by remaining unsanctified and unrenewed they are actually unfitted, in the very nature of things, for the enjoyment of heaven. And should not the work and offices of God the Holy Ghost, in making the vessels of mercy *meet* for their heavenly inheritance, be more prominently put forward than they are, even in the evangelical preaching of our day!

Should not His deity, His attributes, His operations, the glorious and gracious part sustained by this blessed Spirit, in the economy of redemption, be more frequently and fully exhibited? And while it is distinctly stated, that the infinitely meritorious righteousness of

the Son of God, must ever stand alone, in its divine glory, unmixed with any doings or deservings of man's own, as the exclusive plea which the believer is to put forward, for a right of admission into the realms of glory, should it not be as distinctly stated, that this admission would be utterly unavailing for his happiness, unless a glorious work were wrought in him by the Spirit, as well as a glorious work wrought for him by the Son of God. That renewal in the divine image is altogether indispensable for the enjoyment of the divine presence. That without being purified, as well as pardoned—without being sanctified, as well as justified—without a meetness for heaven, as well as a title—the salvation, which the Lord Jesus Christ has wrought out for His people, by His meritorious obedience, and sufferings, could not be fully enjoyed. That therefore there is equal importance in the work of the Holy Spirit, as in that of the Son, and equal gratitude is due to both, for their offices of divine condescension and grace towards the objects of the everlasting Father's love! And that, consequently, the Antinomian scheme, by giving a most unworthy view of the Father's design in sending His own Son into our world, and

of the work accomplished by that Son in the flesh, and also by denying, or throwing into the shade, the work of the Holy Spirit, offers a deep affront to each Divine Person of the adorable Trinity; and is a foul libel on the character both of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER III.

THE APOSTOLICAL TESTIMONY.

ANOTHER unanswerable objection to Antinomianism, and the last I shall notice, is its direct opposition to the word of God—not merely to the most explicit declarations, and most important doctrines, but also to the main design, and the pervading spirit, of the entire of the sacred volume. From its commencement to its close, in the name of its divine Author, the Bible lifts up its voice, yea, and that a mighty voice, to issue the solemn injunction to all, who read its inspired pages—" Be ye holy, for I am holy!' as well as to proclaim the awful warning—"Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord!" Could it have been otherwise, emanating, as it does, from a holy God—and written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost?

In truth, it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that the ultimate design of the revelation of God's will, whether contained in the Old or New Testament, is to restore fallen man to a capacity for the enjoyment

of the divine service and presence, by his renewal in the divine image—even "the putting on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." In subserviency to this design, we find that the doctrines of Scripture are uniformly exhibited, as having a direct tendency, when cordially embraced, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to exercise a sanctifying influence over the heart and life. And the conviction is thus irresistibly forced on our minds, that the clearest conception, or the warmest advocacy, of divine truth, if it fail to accomplish this result, is, in the estimation of Jehovah, nothing worth—cannot be produced by the operation of that Spirit, whose seal upon the soul is holiness—and does not, in the smallest degree, promote in us the end for which a gracious God has vouchsafed to us a revelation of His will.

To prove this position, by a detailed examination of the passages, which would substantiate its truth, would be to transcribe a very large portion of the word of God. A brief survey will, however, be sufficient to establish the assertion I have made; and to shew, that whatever may be the immediate subject, which is under investigation, its connection with the advance-

ment of the believer's sanctification is either directly enforced, or indirectly implied—and we are made to feel, that our knowledge of doctrinal points, however clear or comprehensive, is altogether valueless to ourselves, and unacceptable to our God, if it does not advance our conformity to the character of Him, who "loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity." Thus—are we led to contemplate the stupendous love of Him, even "God, our Saviour," who *so* loved us, and gave Himself for us? What, are we told, was the object He had in view, in this sublime display of His self-sacrificing love? "He gave Himself for us, *that* He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works!"[1] Are we led to meditate on that most mysterious but most comforting doctrine, that the everlasting Father, in the overflowings of a love which passeth all understanding, *so* loved us, that He spared not His own Son, but laid on Him the iniquities of us all, so that, by this transfer of their sins to the account of their divine Surety, all who believe on Jesus, with a living faith, may feel assured of a free, full, and everlasting forgiveness? We are told,[2] that "He Himself bare our sins in His

[1] Tit. ii. 13, 14. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 24.

own body on the tree!" but does the apostle stop here? Oh! no—he tells us, for what purpose the divine Redeemer bore this burthen, and paid this penalty—It was, "that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness!"

Is the mysterious subject of God's predestination of His people brought before us? Unto what, are we told, are they predestinated, in the everlasting purposes of His love? "Whom he did foreknow, He also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of His Son.*"[1] And again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy*, and without blame, before Him, in love."[2] Are the glorious promises of the Gospel set before us, in all their freeness and fulness? What is the influence, we are reminded, that they ought to exercise over us—what the purpose, for which we are assured they were given? Hear the words of the great apostle—"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."[3]

[1] Rom. viii. 29. [2] Eph. i. 4. [3] 2 Cor. vii. 1.

And again, St. Peter tells us—that there "are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, through lust."[1]

Would the apostle urge on the grateful remembrance of his beloved brethren at Rome, the contrast between their former state of degrading bondage, under the dominion of Satan, and their present state of glorious liberty, under the dominion of Christ? In what does he remind them that the very essence of the blessedness of that change consists—"Now," he says, "being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life!" In truth, the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans would alone be abundantly sufficient to annihilate Antinomianism, and shew, that they who "sin, that grace may abound," *cannot* be the servants or children of a holy God.

Study carefully that chapter, which of itself, unanswerably proves, that when St. Paul lays down that great fundamental doctrine, that we are justified by faith only, nothing could be further from his intention, than to afford the most remote

[1] 2 Pet. i. 4.

encouragement to carelessness, much less ungodliness, in heart or life. Mark his indignant "God forbid!" in reply to the blasphemous suggestion—"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Observe the impossibility, in his estimation, that a *true* Christian could so monstrously abuse the grace of the Gospel, implied by the touching question, "*How* shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" See how beautifully he alludes to the spiritual baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection, which are exhibited in the believer's experience, corresponding in a mysterious sense, to the baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection of the Son of God. "We are buried with Him by baptism into death—that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." See this same train of thought carried on in the fifth and sixth verses, shewing, that the design of our old man being crucified with Jesus, is "that henceforth we should not serve sin." Mark his affectionate and solemn exhortation—"Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof! Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members

as instruments of righteousness unto God!" Observe his unanswerable appeal: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness." How could he more plainly or forcibly express his conviction, that [1]he who lives in sin is the servant of sin, and cannot be the servant of God; for that the distinguishing characteristic of His people is, that "being made free from sin, they become the servants of righteousness;" and thus, "becoming servants to God, they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Now take even this cursory glance at the contents of this chapter, and can any thing further be required to shew, that St. Paul felt fully convinced, that the doctrine of justification by faith only, through the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, when scripturally understood, and savingly embraced, tends directly and most powerfully to promote the believer's sanctification; to stimulate him to renounce altogether the service of sin; to walk in newness of life, and to become the servant of God; having his fruit unto holiness, as certainly, as the end

[1] John viii. 34.

of this blessed course will be everlasting life!

Again—what is the mark of those, to whom, as being in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation?—"[1] That they walk *not* after the flesh, but *after the Spirit*—for if ye live, says the Apostle, after the flesh, ye shall die—but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live—for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they* (and they alone,) are the sons of God." *Led by the Spirit!* In what path? In that of sin? Were it not indeed blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to say this? Must not the path He leads God's children in, be the path of holiness?

In fact, does not the Holy Spirit take up His abode in the believer's heart, for the very purpose of making him holy, and thus meet for the presence of the holy God, and the enjoyment of a holy heaven.

What also does St. Paul define to be the essential character of the kingdom of God: "[2]not meat and drink;" not any thing external, but "*righteousness*, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Ponder, with deep attention, that invaluable chapter, in which he delineates, with

[1] Rom. viii. [2] xiv. 17.

such exquisite beauty, the divine portraiture of Christian charity; and proves, that without this divine principle of holy love, implanted in the heart by the Spirit of love, and assimilating the character to that God, who is love, an angel's eloquence, the knowledge of all mysteries, a miraculous faith, the most unbounded liberality in alms-giving, and even a death of martyrdom, would all be nothing worth!

How awful is the warning voice he lifts up, to guard professing Christians from resting in a mere speculative unsanctifying assent to the truths of the Gospel—"[1]Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Would he exhibit, in all its glory, "the exceeding riches of the grace of God, in His kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus?" He says to his Ephesian converts—"[2]By grace are ye saved, through faith—and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." But now mark what follows, to shew how careful he was, (even

[1]Gal. vi. 7, 8. [2]ii. 8, 9, 10.

when most jealous of the honour of God's grace, and most solicitous to ascribe to that grace the undivided glory of man's salvation,) to prove, that no countenance was thereby afforded to a careless or unholy life, but that the doctrine of salvation by grace, properly understood, is a doctrine powerfully promotive of vital godliness. Immediately after he had said, "Not of works, lest any man should boast:" he adds, "for we are His workmanship," (could God's workmanship be any thing but holy?) "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." What again does the apostle declare to be the infallible proof of their having been taught, by the divine teaching of the Holy Spirit, the truth as it is in Jesus? Is it not even this, "[1]that they should put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts—and be renewed in the spirit of their minds—and that they put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness, and *true holiness.*"

Would St. Paul pour out the fulness of his love for his brethren at Philippi, in his favourite language of love—heartfelt prayer? What is

[1] iv. 22, 23, 24.

the object, for which he pleads so fervently in their behalf—"[1] *This* I pray," he says, "that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence, till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." He remembered who it was that said—"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

Would he lead forward, (as he so frequently desires, by bringing the all-important subject before them,) the thoughts of his Colossian converts to that day, when Christ, who is the believer's life, shall appear, and all His faithful people shall appear with Him in glory? Mark how he presses the anticipation of the glory of that day, as a motive for crucifying every sinful appetite and lust—and oh! that every minister of the Gospel, in our day, would herein follow his example.

"[2] Ye shall appear with Him in glory—mortify, *therefore*, your members, which are upon the earth—fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness,

[1] i. 9, 10, 11. [2] iii. 4, 5, 6.

which is idolatry; for which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience; and they, who do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." When he is recalling to the recollection of his Thessalonian converts, his affectionate exhortations, while he dwelt among them, what does he remind them was the great object he kept constantly in view: "[1] Ye know," he says, "how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, (as a father doth his children,) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory!" And what does he [2] afterwards remind them was the purpose of God concerning them, in calling them to the knowledge of His dear Son: "*this* is the will of God, even your *sanctification*."

And when, in the close of his epistle to those beloved converts, he throws, as it were, his whole heart and soul into a parting prayer, to express *all*, that in the intense fervour of his love, he desired and sought for them, at the hands of their common God and Father—what is the substance of the prayer, offered up for this purpose? "[3] The very God of peace sanctify you wholly—and I pray God your whole spirit,

[1] 1st Thes. ii. 11, 12. [2] iv. 3. [3] v. 23.

and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Oh! St. Paul felt, that beyond *this*—the perfect sanctification of their whole nature—he could not go in his desires—nor even God in the putting forth of His power, for their attainment of the highest possible degree of happiness, of which, to the utmost extent of creature-capacity, they could be possessed! Mark the charge he gives his beloved Timothy, after he had spoken of the love of money, as the root of all evil, and had set forth the ruinous consequences of inordinate covetousness—"[1] But thou, O! man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." It is *thus* he commands him to prove that he has been enabled, by divine grace, to "fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life!" Look at the two-fold inscription, he declares to be written on the seal, by which the foundation of God is sealed—"[2] The Lord knoweth them that are His;" *and* "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity!" Could he more plainly say, that the Lord knoweth none, as His own people, but those who depart from iniquity! And how

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 11, 12. [2] 2 Tim. ii. 19.

awfully is this truth confirmed by the declaration of the Lord Himself, when He tells us, that in the day that he shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and summon all His professing people, to appear before His judgment-seat, He will say to those, who had done many wonderful works in His name, but had not departed from iniquity in their hearts and lives—"Depart from Me, I never knew you." How solemnly does this assure us, that we must either depart from *iniquity now*, or depart *from Christ for ever!* How fully is it enforced in that most beautiful compendium of the Gospel! (Titus ii. 11, 12, 13, 14.) Again, for what purpose are we told, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God?—Is it not "[1] for doctrine—for reproof—for correction—for instruction in righteousness—that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?" Does the apostle record it as "[2] a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?" Oh! let us remember, that he equally records it "[3] as a faithful saying," and one which he wished Titus "constantly to affirm—that they, which have believed in God, might

[1] iii. 16, 17. [2] 1 Tim. i. 15. [3] Tit. iii. 8.

be careful to maintain good works—these things, (he adds) are good, and profitable unto men." After the apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, had reminded them of the inestimably precious privileges, which they possessed, in "having boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, and also in having an High Priest over the house of God, who could be touched with the feeling of their infirmities," what exhortation does he address to them, as the possessors of such glorious privileges? "[1] Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water—(the outward emblem of the inward purity, arising from the cleansing influences of the Holy Spirit,) and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works!" How uniformly practical is the apostle's style of stating doctrinal truth—and how habitually does he press every privilege, which the believer enjoys, as a motive and means for his growth in grace, and his advancement in godliness! Look also at the various images employed to illustrate the character, and conflict, of those who "are called to be saints"! Are they not described as "a holy

[1] Heb. x. 19—22.

priesthood, a holy nation." Are they not called "the temples of the Holy Ghost"—and must not His temples be holy? Is not the warfare they have to wage, a holy warfare, and the panoply, with which they are furnished from on high, a panoply of light—an armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left? Would it not be a very mockery to assert that any one living in sin could claim *these* titles, or was engaged in *this* warfare?

When the apostle would reconcile his suffering Hebrew brethren to the afflictions, with which God, in His fatherly love, had chastened them, what is the topic, from which he derives the strongest, sweetest consolation, to pour as balm into their bleeding hearts? He reminds them of their Heavenly Father's object in thus afflicting the children of His love. He does it (he says) "[1]for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness:" as if he had said—Be not cast down, when you are chastened by God, neither "faint, when you are rebuked of Him—for whom He loveth He chasteneth." These chastening dispensations are the very tokens of His love. He loves you, as dear children, for the sake of His beloved Son; and desires your

[1] Heb. xii. 10.

happiness, with the fondest, the tenderest solicitude, and *therefore* chastens you, that you may thereby be made partakers of His own holiness, *because* He knows that it is thus alone, consistently with His character, as the Holy God, that He can make you partakers of His own happiness.

Oh! what a consolatory reflection for the child of God! and what an unanswerable demonstration, that, if, we would be happy, as God is happy, we must be holy, as God is holy.

How impressively solemn is the warning of St. James: "[1] Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves!" And, surely if ever there was a period, when this warning of the apostle should be proclaimed, with reiterated frequency, and uncompromising faithfulness, from every pulpit, it is the present, when the multitude of hearers of the word is so immensely increased, while judging from the temper, character, and conduct, displayed by so many professors, in the various relationships and duties of life, so deplorably destitute of the stamp of the Spirit of Christ, we are compelled to fear, that such numbers are not doers of the

[1] i. 22.

word, but *hearers only*, fatally deceiving their own selves, to their everlasting destruction.

Not less important the closing sentence, with which he sums up the observations he had been making, on the vital operative nature of justifying faith; that "[1] as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

That nothing could be further from the mind of St. James than to contradict St. Paul, where he asserts, in establishing the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel: "that we are justified by faith, without the works of the law," is manifest, both from the obvious truth, that it is utterly impossible that two inspired apostles, writing under the dictation of the same Divine Spirit, could contradict each other; and from the fact that both St. Paul and St. James appeal to the same example, that of Abraham, in confirmation of the doctrinal views they were enforcing, so that they must have felt there was a perfect harmony of sentiment between them.

And are not their statements, when carefully examined, easily shown to be perfectly reconcileable? St. Paul asserts, that we are justified by faith, without the works of the law; that is, on our cordially believing, and confiding in the

[1] ii. 26.

Lord Jesus Christ, as the all-sufficient propitiation for our sins, "made of God, unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," we are justified, that is, pardoned, and brought into a state of acceptance with God, and accounted and treated by Him as righteous, without any works of any law, whether antecedent to this faith, or consequent upon it, being taken into the account before God, in the matter of our justification, which is a free gift of unmerited grace, bestowed on us exclusively on the ground of the meritorious sufferings and righteousness of the Redeemer.

Now how does this statement at all militate against the declaration of St. James, that "faith without works is dead," and that therefore, in order to prove that we are in possession of that faith, of which St. Paul speaks as justifying, (and which he uniformly represents as a living faith, "working by love,") good works—the holy tempers, affections, and actions of a holy life, are indispensably necessary; as the infallible evidences, because the necessary fruits, of a living, which alone is a justifying faith. Thus St. Paul asserts, that the works, which a true faith will necessarily produce, are not taken into God's account in the matter of justification, as

constituting any part of the meritorious consideration, on the ground of which He bestows this inestimable blessing; as this would be dividing the glory of the work of salvation, between His well-beloved Son, and the sinners whom He died to save. St. James asserts, that the faith which justifies, by resting on the Lord Jesus Christ, as our peace and our righteousness, must be a living, an operative faith; must evidence its vitality by the fruits it bears; for, "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also!"

Now is there the smallest discrepancy—yea, is there not the most harmonious agreement, between these statements; and assuredly ours is an age, when the admonition of St. James is altogether as urgently required, as the exposition of St. Paul. When it is as imperatively necessary to remind professing Christians, that the *only* faith which justifies, is that which produces good works, as to remind them, that the good works, which faith produces, are shut out entirely from any share in the office of justifying the sinner, which is the exclusive prerogative of the Saviour's finished work.

Perhaps, indeed, more stress should be laid on the former, than even evangelical ministers

generally do; because, in the present day, from the increased spread of the preaching and profession of evangelical truth, the Antinomian abuse of the grace of the Gospel, which would reconcile a careless or even unholy life on earth, with a warranted hope of eternal life in heaven, on the ground of the Redeemer's imputed righteousness, is altogether as much to be dreaded and deprecated, as that pharisaical pride, which would mix up its own imperfect righteousness, and imaginary merits, in the matter of justification, with the alone perfect righteousness, and infinite merits of the Son of God. Briefly then to sum up all in one sentence—Christ is the meritorious cause, faith the appointed instrument, and works the declarative evidence, of our justification.

I have dwelt so much at length on the declaration of St. James, because, when properly understood, without interfering, in the least degree, with the glorious doctrine of justification by faith only; it lays the axe to the very root of Antinomianism, by exhibiting the professed faith which does not work by love, to the production of the fruits of obedience and righteousness, in all the loathsomeness of spiritual death; no more entitled to the name and privi-

leges of living faith, than a corpse is entitled to the name of a living man! Oh, that this solemn reflection might sound a trumpet-peal of alarm in the ears of thousands of unsanctified professors of an evangelical creed, who are resting a ruinous dependance on a righteousness, which is indeed alone and infinitely sufficient for the justification of all true believers, but which is imputed only unto them, who *believe* with a *living*, a *working*, a *sanctifying* faith.

Not less explicit or important is the testimony of St. Peter to the indispensable necessity of holiness, as the fruit of faith, and the essence of meetness for the enjoyment of the purchased inheritance of eternal glory. In the very opening of his epistle, he speaks of believers as "elect, according to the foreknowledge of the Father, through *sanctification* of the Spirit, unto *obedience*, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

What can be more impressive than this solemn admonition, which may in truth be considered as expressing the pervading spirit, which breathes throughout the whole of the Sacred Volume? "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation; because it is written—Be ye holy, for I am holy!"

As if he had said—Since He who hath called you to a participation of all the glorious privileges and promises of the Gospel, is the holy God—as holiness is the very essence at once of His happiness and His glory—as you would evidence yourselves to be indeed His children, by bearing His image, and fulfil the design for which He called you out of darkness into His marvellous light—be ye holy, in all manner of conversation, even as He is holy.

And to shew, to what an extent the apostle deemed it necessary that this holiness should carry its purifying influences; what an inward and all-pervading principle he designed it to be, he says, in a subsequent verse, "Sanctify the Lord God in your *hearts*."

Again, what a striking proof is supplied in the closing chapter of his second epistle, that it was his constant solicitude and endeavour, to make every subject, which he brought before the minds of his brethren in Christ, minister to their sanctification; thus clearly evincing, that he deemed the knowledge of divine truth valuable and profitable, just in proportion as it conduced to the establishment of holiness in the heart and life. The apostle had been exhibiting the awful scenes, that will accompany the manifes-

tation of the day of the Lord! We seem to hear the heavens passing away with a great noise—We behold the rolling waves of that deluge of fire, in which the earth, and all things that are therein, shall be burnt up! And what is the voice that, amidst the appalling convulsions of a dissolving world, bursts on our ears? Oh! how loudly does it call on us to be holy, even as God is holy! "Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!" And when, a little after, he had lifted up the veil, that hangs over futurity, so far as to discover to the delighted gaze of faith "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"—how wisely does he abstain from all merely amusing speculations on the glorious theme, and fasten down the minds of his beloved brethren on the practical lessons they should learn, from the contemplation of the beautiful world he had unveiled to their view, as the abode of righteousness, in which they hoped to dwell—"Seeing, beloved, that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

How clearly does this prove, that the apostle

felt the anticipation of the second coming of the Lord to be pre-eminently sanctifying in its influence; and that he wished it to be abidingly cherished in the recollection of all who love the Lord, for the purpose of promoting their progress in holiness of heart and life.

What an important lesson does this teach to all, who desire, in our day, to direct the attention of the Christian Church to the second Advent of the Son of God! And what an imperative obligation is thus laid, by the apostle's example, on all faithful ministers, prominently to exhibit and enforce this blessed hope of the believer—"even the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour," as one of the most powerful incentives to aspire after the most unsullied holiness of heart, the most unreserved devotedness of life.

If we now turn to the Epistles of St. John, we shall find them full of the most awakening appeals to those professors of the Gospel, in his day, whose lives did not bear a consistent testimony to the truth of their profession. It might indeed be said of the beloved disciple, in regard to these epistles, (as we remarked was said of a celebrated Commentator on the Bible, in our day, in regard to his Commentary,) "that he

wrote as if the genius of Antinomianism were stalking before his eyes."

There is not, perhaps, in the entire of the Sacred Volume, any portion, more powerfully calculated than the First Epistle of St. John, to expose the ruinous consequences of an unsanctifying profession of evangelical truth, and to enforce the indispensable necessity of that holiness, without which the hope of heaven is but a false and fleeting dream—yea, without which heaven itself would be a very hell to an unsanctified soul. It is, therefore, a portion, to which, in the present day of spreading profession, the attention of all, who appear to feel an awakened interest about their eternal welfare, and who would not wish to deceive themselves in a matter of such infinite moment, ought to be especially directed. And more particularly should it be studied, in the most diligent and devout spirit, by those, who profess to have found peace with God, through the death of His dear Son, and to be resting an assured hope of heaven on the divine righteousness, which He has wrought out for His people—and clothed in which the true believer is looked upon with infinite complacency, even by the eyes of the holy and heart-searching God.

How important for them to try the validity of their profession by such a simple, yet searching test, as the following words supply. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: *but* if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship, one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin!"

How could language more unequivocally or emphatically express, that an indispensable evidence of our really having fellowship with God, and being cleansed by the blood of His Son from all sin—is *walking* in the light—is a consistent Christian walking with God, in the path of His commandments—in the footsteps of His dear Son—a steady course of holy obedience—a life, habitually regulated by those principles of righteousness, which Jesus enforced both by His precepts and His example! Again, he inculcates the same supremely important truth, when he asserts—"*Hereby* we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments; he that *saith*, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him!" Why, if there were no other verse in the Scripture, bearing on the subject,

that one would be sufficient to demolish for ever the whole fabric of Antinomianism. While that verse stands, an unimpeached witness to the truth of God—keeping His commandments must for ever remain, on the indubitable testimony of God Himself, the altogether indispensable evidence, and necessary fruit of a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor should we omit to notice the emphatic confirmation of this truth, in those memorable words of our blessed Lord Himself—"If a man love Me, he *will* keep my words—he that loveth Me not, keepeth not my sayings."

No ingenuity of sophistry can evade this conclusion—it is not in the compass of human language to speak more plainly: "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar." Surely there is no ambiguity here—no occasion for human commentaries to explain the meaning of this passage. Beyond all controversy, the Antinomian, who fancies himself released from the obligation of keeping the commandments of God, by his professed trust in the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer, is convicted by this verse, as a liar, and the truth is incontestably proved not to be in him.

Oh! that all in our day, who profess to know

Christ, would pray over this verse, till its every word was, as it were, engraven on their hearts, by the Holy Spirit, and their lives exhibited satisfactory evidence to God, and to the world, that their profession of faith could stand this searching test.

Observe, again, how the apostle reiterates the sentiment, as if he felt he could not too frequently repeat the solemn truth. "He that saith, he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk, even as He walked!"—ought to walk, even as Jesus walked! Is *this* the bounden duty of all, who say they abide in Him? Is *this* what alone will stamp sincerity on their profession? Walking, even as Jesus walked! Alas! what multitudes of professors, in our day, we cannot but fear, this test will strip of their fallacious hopes—their false claims to the character and privileges of the children of God! Oh! if conformity to the image of the Son of God—if treading in His steps—if following His example, if *these* be required, as marks of sincerity, in all who say that they are abiding in Him, would it not well become thousands in our day, who appear confident of their safety, to examine carefully on what foundation their confidence is built!

What a death-blow does St. John give to an unsanctifying hope of eternal glory, when he declares, speaking of a scripturally warranted hope of salvation, that "every man that has this hope in Christ, purifieth himself, even as He is pure;" and the connexion, in which this declaration stands, stamps on it peculiar force and value. The apostle had been contemplating the stupendous love, displayed in our redemption! In a transport of wonder, and adoring gratitude, he cries out, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!"—that *we*, vile, miserable, polluted, hell-deserving sinners, that we should be called by the highest, the most glorious title which God Himself could confer—the sons of God. His eye then glances from the love that has been displayed, to the glory that shall be revealed—from the day of Christ's abasement, when He came, in great humiliation, to be lifted up upon a cross of shame, to the day of His exaltation, when He shall come again, in unutterable majesty, to be lifted up on His throne of glory. And looking forward to that promised day of complete triumph to the Redeemer, and to all who, by faith, are one with Him, he un-

folds, as far as they can be unveiled to our view, while tabernacling in the flesh, the magnificent prospects of ineffable blessedness, which shall then be bestowed on all the faithful followers of the Lamb.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be!"—we cannot at present, with our feeble, sin-defiled faculties, clearly discern, or fully grasp, the glory that shall *then* be revealed both *to* us, and *in* us; but *this* we know, (and assuredly it may content us to know this, for what can we possibly desire *more* than this?) "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him, as He is."

But now mark the use the apostle makes of this glorious anticipation—Observe the influence, which he declares uniformly to emanate from this blessed hope, so as thereby to point out, with infallible discrimination, the character of those, who alone are warranted, on scriptural grounds, to cherish it with humble confidence! "*Every one* that hath *this* hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Could language more clearly or emphatically proclaim, that blessed are the pure in heart, and they alone, for they, and they alone, shall rejoicingly see a Saviour-God, as He is, in that day of His ap-

pearing, and be partakers of His glory. Or could a more solemn warning be addressed to all, who profess to be expectants of a participation in the Saviour's glory in that day, that, if their hope does not exercise a purifying influence over their heart and life, however confidently it may be cherished, it is *not* a hope, which has been inspired by the Holy Spirit—it does *not* rest on the warrant of the word of God—and, in the day of Christ's appearing, it will be changed into utter and everlasting despair.

How fully is this confirmed by the description which the apostle gives in the apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem, into which shall enter nothing that defileth, and from which therefore, shall be excluded "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and *all liars*, who shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone—which is the second death." (See Rev. xxi. 8, 27. xxii. 12—16.) Mark also the awful warning of St. Paul, when speaking of such sins—"Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

I will adduce but one more testimony from the beloved disciple; and it is one, which might be relied upon, as altogether sufficient, did it stand alone in the word of God, to sweep away into utter annihilation that refuge of lies, which Antinomianism affords, as the basis of a sinner's hope. In truth, the whole controversy might be allowed to hinge on the first ten verses of the 3rd chap. of the 1st Epistle of St. John: and these, if properly examined, could not fail, (with an influence like the touch of Ithuriel's spear,) when applied to the genius of Antinomianism, however disguised under the attractive form of an angel of light, to make it start up before our eyes, in all its native hideousness and deformity, as a spirit of darkness, bearing on its front enmity against God, and hatred of His holy law. I would here briefly notice the remarkable strength of the apostle's language, in proving, that personal holiness is an altogether indispensable mark, whereby the children of God may be discriminated from the children of the devil. "Whosoever abideth in Him, (in Christ,) sinneth not—whosoever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known Him." Could words more explicitly declare, that an habitual crucifying of sinful desires, and an habitual cherishing of holy

affections, evidenced to be of divine origin, even implantation by the Holy Ghost, by their producing the fruits of a holy life, are altogether indispensable proofs of abiding in Christ. But the apostle is not satisfied with this strong assevertaion—he subjoins a solemn warning—" Let no man deceive you"—as if he foresaw, how the frightful abuse of the glorious doctrine, that the believer is justified freely through the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness, would, in after times, be formed into a Christ-dishonouring system, for the Antinomian principle had already begun to work.

" Let no man deceive you, (he says,)—he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous !"—Not, you see, he that professes to trust in the Redeemer's righteousness, while he remaineth unrighteous himself—but he, who, *while* trusting, *undividedly*, in the righteousness of the Redeemer, like Him, in whom he trusts, supremely loves, and desires to practise, all righteousness.

Now, mark—having shewn whose pattern the doers of righteousness are copying, and whose followers they are thus evidenced to be, the apostle as clearly exhibits the true character and condition of those, who commit sin—the ex-

ample *they* are following, and the master to whom *they* belong. And oh! what awful words are those, in which he announces this appalling part of his subject—"He that committeth sin is of the devil!" How unanswerably does this demonstrate, that an habitual indulgence in sin—in any one known sin, (no matter what truths may be speculatively believed, or professed, or what hopes may be confidently cherished,) infallibly proclaims its victim to be a child of Satan, not of God! In truth, sin, habitually indulged, is Satan's own seal upon the soul; bearing his image, and marking and securing it as his property. Such a character cannot have any lot or part in the salvation, which the Son of God came down from heaven to accomplish for His people; and the very essence of which is deliverance from the power, as well as the punishment of sin; for, adds the apostle, "for *this* purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." Whoever, therefore, practises those works, which it was the very purpose of the Son of God, in His manifestation in the flesh, to destroy, is running counter to His design, in coming into our world, and doing all he can to frustrate the purposes, for which He shrouded the

glory of His Deity under a veil of flesh, and stooped even so low, as to submit to the ignominious death of the cross. And can he, who is thus diametrically opposed to the Saviour's purpose in His incarnation, sufferings, and death, be supposed to have an interest in the work of salvation, which He wrought out for His people, because he professedly trusts in that work for acceptance, while doing all in his power to defeat the design, for which it was undertaken and finished?

But the apostle seems anxious to impress this all-important truth yet more forcibly—for he adds, by way of contrast to this awful mark of the followers of Satan—"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him, and he *cannot* sin, because he is born of God!" As if he had said—Every child of God has such an unfailing principle of a divine and holy life abiding in him; such an unconquerable hatred of sin, and love of holiness, enthroned in his heart, by the Holy Spirit, who takes up His abode there, for the very purpose of making his body a temple of the holy God, and renewing his soul in the divine image, in righteousness and true holiness—that he cannot habitually commit sin—he cannot habitually indulge

in what he knows his Heavenly Father hates. No affectionate grateful child can delight in systematically opposing a beloved father's will, and running counter to his commandments. Even thus, "Whosoever is born of God cannot commit sin,"—it cannot be his course of life—the path, in which he loves to walk; because, being born of God, the holy seed, (which must, agreeably to its nature, like all other seed, bear fruit of its own kind; therefore, must bear the fruits of holiness,) remaineth in him. So that, while this remaineth, the fruit, which it produces, must, also remain, in different degrees of abundance in different believers, according to the degrees of faithfulness, and earnestness, with which they seek and improve the influences of the Holy Spirit, (who can alone, by His divine power, fertilize this precious seed,) and endeavour to eradicate whatever might tend to retard its growth, or diminish its fruitfulness. In some, therefore, the good seed bringeth forth heavenly fruit thirty, in some sixty, in some an hundred fold. And, then, in concluding this powerful attestation to the supreme importance of personal holiness in the believer, the apostle sets forth the "doing righteousness," and "committing sin," as the respective badges of distinc-

tion, by which the followers of the Saviour and of Satan may be discriminated. For he says, "In *this* (or herein—even by the mark—that 'he that committeth sin is of the devil—but he that is born of God cannot commit sin,') in *this* the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil!"

Now, may it not be fairly asked, if it had been the express purpose of St. John, in writing this epistle, to enter his solemn protest against the Antinomian heresy, and to warn the professing Church of Christ, that the only faith in the Redeemer's righteousness which will justify and save the soul, is that which produces the hatred and mortification of all sin, and the love and practice of all righteousness, and that the only hope of participating in the Saviour's glory, which the day of His appearing will ratify, is that which leads to a participation of His purity now—could the apostle have used plainer or stronger language?

Has he not, as explicitly as words could convey his meaning, declared, in the verses we have been considering, that the whole professing Christian church is divided into two separate families, "the children of God, and the children of the devil?" That the members of these

respective families bear the image of their respective parents. And that therefore, as the devil is the author of sin, his children may be known by having the stamp of sin—the likeness of their father—branded on their characters, pleasures, and pursuits. Whereas the children of that God, who is essentially holy—who loveth righteousness, with an infinite affection, and hateth iniquity, with an infinite abhorrence, must be marked out as His, by having His likeness—the impress of His image—the seal of His Spirit, stamped on their souls, and exhibited in their life, "in righteousness and true holiness."

But, here, it may be necessary to guard against an erroneous impression, which might arise from a misconception of the apostle's meaning, and unnecessarily disturb the peace of some timid, humble child of God, by a groundless apprehension of the safety of his state, when tried by this searching test.

If it be an indispensable mark of a child of God, that he "sinneth not—yea! that he cannot commit sin, because he is born of God," then may some trembling Christian, conscious of a constant conflict with indwelling sin, which often gains a temporary victory, breaking out in tempers, words, or actions, inconsistent with that

perfect purity, and holiness, after which he aspires, be ready to cry out, in desponding alarm: "Alas! if this be the only infallible mark, by which the child of God may be discriminated, how can I presume to appropriate to myself the title, with all the glorious privileges which it involves? I, who find sin so cleaving to me, that it mingles with and defiles my every thought, word, and deed—so polluting my very purest services, and profaning, by its unhallowed presence, the inner sanctuary of my soul—that I find no prayer so suitable to my state, as "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" and no verse so precious to my soul, as "This is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world, to save sinners."

Let us therefore carefully examine the apostle's language, lest such a spirit as *this* should be harassed with needless apprehensions. Is St. John, then, to be understood, as advocating the doctrine of sinless perfection? Does he mean to assert, that no one is warranted to hope he is a child of God, who has not obtained a *complete* conquest over every sinful propensity of his fallen nature, so as to be able to say, with triumphant joy, "I have no sin."

Unquestionably *not*. Independently of all abstract reasoning on the subject, we have his own express assurance, that he is not the advocate of a doctrine, so palpably opposed to the whole tenor of the Word of God, and to the very constitution of the Gospel-scheme of redemption: for he has himself told us, that "*if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us!*"

It is therefore incontrovertibly certain, were it only from this one passage, that it could not be the apostle's intention, in the verses we have been considering, to assert, that it is possible for a believer, while on earth, to attain to a state of sinless perfection. Since he makes the profession of having attained to such a state, a sure mark of self-deception, as to our real character and condition; an infallible proof, that "the truth is not in us!"

How then are we to reconcile the apparently contradictory statements, that "he that is born of God cannot commit sin:" and, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

If we attend not merely to the letter, but to the spirit, of the two statements, the apparent contradiction will be at once removed, and a

beautiful harmony between them be discovered; illustrating at once the holiness and the humility of the Christian character, and exhibiting the equally indispensable necessity of our being justified freely by the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness, and sanctified thoroughly, body, soul, and spirit, by the influences of His grace.

By comparing the two statements together, we are reminded of two equally important truths, that, as sinners, deserving of a sentence of eternal condemnation, and in whom sin carries on a continual conflict, even to the last moment of our earthly existence—if saved at all, it must be altogether of grace—free, unmerited grace, through the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness, not in any measure of works lest any man should boast. And, at the same time, that they, who are justified, are also sanctified; that all who are made righteous by the righteousness of the Saviour, are made holy by the indwelling of the Spirit; and that they, who are Christ's, by a vital union with Him, while they rest on His merits the whole weight of their eternal hopes, give *this* proof of their union, even that they "have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts," and bring forth the fruits of righteousness, to the glory of His grace.

When the apostle, therefore, tells us, that the child of God cannot commit sin, we are reminded, that such a view of the infinite hatefulness of sin is exhibited to the believer's soul, by the sufferings and death of God's well-beloved Son, that he can no longer take pleasure in, or hold fellowship with, that abominable and accursed thing, which was the cause of such inconceivable agonies to the Saviour, whom he loves, and of which God has testified His abhorrence, in such an appalling manifestation of His wrath, as was presented on Calvary's cross!

We are thus reminded, that the warfare of the child of God against sin must be an universal warfare—admitting of no compromise with any form or modification of sin; and which is so far from allowing of any exception, in behalf of any cherished bosom-lust, that it directs its most strenuous efforts against the sin, which doth most easily beset us. We learn also that the obedience, which the child of God is to render to the divine commands, in testimony of his grateful love to that Saviour, who has bought him with His own blood, must be an universal obedience—not singling out any one of God's commandments for neglect or violation, but ren-

dering to them all alike a cordial and constant subjection, "without partiality, and without hypocrisy." And that the standard, which the child of God must set up for his imitation, and to which he must incessantly direct his aspirations and his aim, must be nothing short of perfect holiness, as exhibited in the character and life of the Son of God—not selecting, as the object of *exclusive* imitation, any of the divine features of that character, to the omission of the rest; but seeking by divine grace, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to attain to the closest conformity to them all. And if any features should be preferred, for *peculiar* study, and efforts at imitation, the honest-hearted Christian will select those, to which, from constitutional temperament, or any other cause, he is, by nature, more peculiarly opposed.

From this, which the apostle's language unquestionably involves, it follows, by necessary consequence, that if any professing Christian resign himself to the dominion of any one sin—if there be any one bosom-lust, which he *will* cherish, however willing to crucify all the rest—any Agag he is resolved to spare, even while he sacrifices whatever else he is commanded to destroy, this exception, in favour of any one

known sin, brands insincerity on his profession of Christianity, and delusion on his hope of heaven. And with whatever confidence he may cherish that hope, or with whatever plausibility he may maintain that profession, he is *not* a child of God, for *whosoever* is born of God doth not habitually, and allowedly commit sin, yea, he cannot thus commit sin, because he is born of God!

On the other hand, if we are so ignorant, both of the extent and spirituality of God's holy law, reaching to the most secret thoughts of our hearts, and requiring perfect purity, and uninterrupted obedience, and also of our own deficiencies and defilement, as to fancy ourselves to be altogether free from sin— and to have fully attained to the standard of obedience and holiness, set before us in the Gospel—there cannot be a surer evidence, that we are deceiving ourselves, in our estimate of our own state, and that the truth is not in us. That truth, which, when received into the heart, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, always so humbles the believer, even when his strivings after holiness are most zealous and most successful, under such an overwhelming sense of His own sinfulness—the impurity of his motives, when most pure, and his want of con-

formity to the divine image, even when most closely conformed--as makes him cling, with all the earnestness of the grasp of faith, to the Redeemer's righteousness, as that, which alone can fully satisfy all the requirements of God's holy law, and therefore as that, on which exclusively he rests his undivided hopes of salvation. And thus is he prepared, with all the company of the redeemed, to cast the crown of glory at his Redeemer's feet, in grateful acknowledgment, that it is the purchase of His most precious blood, and to join in the universal chorus of praise, which they shall lift up before His throne—saying, "Worthy—and worthy *alone*—is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive honour, and glory, and power, and blessing! Therefore unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even the Father, to Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SAVIOUR'S TESTIMONY.

IF, from the testimony of the apostles, on this important subject, we turn to that of their divine Master, we shall find the most entire harmony subsisting between them. We shall find, that He no less explicitly maintains the indispensable necessity of personal holiness, flowing from the love of God, enthroned in the heart, as the inseparable concomitant, and only infallible evidence, of a saving faith; that He no less unequivocally declares the indulgence of any one known sin to be utterly incompatible with a well-grounded hope of salvation, through His own meritorious sufferings and righteousness. In truth, does not His name bear the most decisive testimony to this truth? Yea! is not the very name of Jesus in itself sufficient to expose the utter unsoundness of the Antinomian scheme? Is not the reason assigned by the

angel for giving this name to the Saviour, "*because* He shall save His people *from* their sins," an unanswerable refutation of that scheme? For is it not the design of Antinomianism to represent Him, as saving them *in* their sins? And does it not therefore tend to rob that precious name of all its glory, and to set forth Jesus as a Saviour, of the very opposite character to that, which the Scriptures proclaim?

In confirmation of the truth of this assertion, we may also confidently appeal to the uniform tenor of our blessed Lord's teaching, which might be characterised as pre-eminently *practical* —and always calculated to produce the conviction, that no correctness of speculative views, no profession of attachment to Him, or dependance on Him, could compensate, in His estimation, for the absence of that cordial obedience to His commandments, which He represents as the only unquestionable proof of sincere love to Himself reigning in the heart. What, in truth, is the sermon on the mount, (Mat. v. vi. vii.) that matchless effusion of divine wisdom, clothed in the most attractive garb, with which human language could invest it, but an exhibition, from its commencement to its close, of the character which it was the design of the Son of God to

form in His disciples, and to the formation of which every doctrine He has revealed is intended to conduce—the genius of the dispensation He came into our world to establish—and the motives and principles, by which His people should be influenced and regulated, in all the various relationships and duties of life. Look at the beatitudes with which it opens! What language could more distinctly or more impressively announce, that the formation of a character in His followers, congenial to the character of God, and suited to the atmosphere of Heaven, was with Him an object of primary importance, to which all the arrangements and developments of the divine dispensation, which He was then introducing upon earth, were to be subservient; and that the very essence of the blessedness, which He came to bestow on the faithful recipients of His divine instructions—on those, for whose salvation He was content to endure the cross, despising its shame, consisted in the ascendancy of holy and heavenly principles, tempers, and affections, in their hearts, issuing in a consistent course of holy and heavenly conversation and conduct, in their lives.

Is not the language of those beatitudes, in the mouth of the divine Redeemer, substantially

this? "I have come down from My throne of glory in the heavens, to be the communicator of happiness to the sons of men! But, at the very outset of My ministry of mercy, I would wish it to be distinctly understood, that the happiness, which I have visited this world to impart to the children of men, is a happiness, of which the smile of a reconciled God, lifted up on the pardoned soul, is the source—a happiness of character, not of circumstances—a happiness altogether different from what the votaries of the world desire and pursue—a happiness, whose constituent elements are humility, and godly sorrow for sin—meekness, and a thirsting after righteousness—mercifulness of disposition, and purity of heart—a desire to extend the reign of peace throughout the earth—and a willingness to endure the severest persecution, for the Redeemer's sake! In fine, a happiness, whose very essence is restoration to the favour, and renewal in the image of God! Such is the happiness I have come down from heaven to impart. Such the character, which My religion is intended to form. Such the dispositions and desires of those, whom I call blessed. I announce this, in the very commencement of my ministry. I write it, as it were, on the very portal of the sacred

edifice I am about to erect, to the glory of God —that no man may mistake the nature of that blessedness, which, by coming to Me, as a divine Teacher and Saviour, he is privileged to expect."

Let us look, now, at the substance of this incomparable sermon. Observe, in their fuller development, the various features of the character of those, whom He, who is Himself the source and substance of all true happiness, pronounces blessed! The forgivingness, which must not utter a single resentful expression, yea, or even cherish a single resentful thought—the purity, which shrinks from so much as a momentary indulgence of unhallowed desire—the meekness, which endures the most unjustifiable provocations, with unconquerable patience —the generosity, which waves its just rights, rather than enforce them in an unchristian spirit, and delights in liberality, without hope of recompense from those, on whom it is bestowed. The love of enemies, producing the most benevolent desires and exertions to promote their eternal welfare; that characteristic precept of the Gospel, which alone would be sufficient to evidence its divine original, and prove it to be an emanation from that God, who, in the very

essence of His nature, is love. The unostentatious charity and piety, which delight in concealment from every eye, but that of Him, who seeth in secret—the simplicity of purpose, seeking, with singleness of aim, the glory of God—the unreserved devotedness of an *undivided* heart to His service—a cheerful confidingness in His fatherly love and care—a supreme solicitude to seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, while reposing an undoubting trust in Him, who feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the flowers of the field, for whatever measure of temporal comfort He knows to be needful—the candour, which puts the most charitable construction on the conduct of others; and the conscientiousness, which is all but scrupulously severe in judging our own. The fervency of prayer, which asks, in the unquestioning confidence of faith, grounded on the promise of a faithful God, and derives the sweetest encouragement, for the success of its supplications, from the experience of the tenderness of an earthly parent's love. And, finally, that invaluable precept of "doing to others as we would that they should do unto us," which, if honestly applied, would afford us an infallible directory, for regulating our conduct to our

fellow-creatures—securing to them all that equitable, compassionate, and generous treatment; all that scrupulous respect to their rights, and tender sympathy in their sorrows, and affectionate ministrations to their welfare, temporal and eternal, which, if placed in their circumstances, we would be warranted to desire and expect! Such are the features of the Christian character, as pourtrayed, in this inimitable sermon, by the divine Redeemer's hand.

And now, mark, at the close of this divine discourse, how solemnly our blessed Lord lifts up the voice of affectionate warning, to expose the utter uselessness of an uninfluential profession of attachment to His name; and to enforce the necessity of a holy life, as an indispensable evidence of the heart being renewed by divine grace! Ponder well the declaration, that "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit; wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them!" How absurd, then, in the face of this verse—yea! how insulting to the Son of God—to maintain the opinion, that a professed dependance on His righteousness, which does not produce the fruits of righteousness can be a saving faith. For is not this, in other words, to say, in direct contra-

diction to the Saviour's express declaration, that a tree may be good, without bringing forth good fruit—yea, may be a tree of divine planting, and yet bring forth only evil fruit! What, again, can be more explicit, or more awful, than the warning contained in that verse, which ought to be sounded forth with reiterated urgency, in our day, in the ears of every professor of an evangelical creed? "*Not* every one that *saith* unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; *but* he that *doeth the will* of my Father, which is in heaven!" How desperate the infatuation, which, in spite of *such* a warning, clings to a hope of acceptance with God, through the Redeemer's righteousness, accompanied by a profession of respect, and submission, and love to the Lord Jesus, which, however plausible or imposing in its external demonstrations of attachment, is not evidenced to be of the operation of the Holy Spirit, by bringing the heart and life into subjection to the will of God. And how solemnly are we reminded, that the worthlessness of such a profession, and such a hope, will be most fearfully exhibited, in THAT day, when He, whom these deluded victims of Satan have pretended to reverence and confide in as their Lord and

Saviour, will say to many, "who have even prophesied in His name, and in His name cast out devils, and in His name done many wonderful works"—"I never knew you: depart from Me, *ye that work iniquity!*" Oh! surely, that terrific sentence, uttered by the merciful Saviour's lips, is abundantly sufficient to demonstrate the hopelessness of the Antinomian's hope, and utterly to demolish the unhallowed fabric of his unscriptural creed! And then, as if to mark, with a simplicity of language, which the youngest child cannot mistake, and yet a strength of statement, which the acutest philosopher cannot overthrow, that the only evidence of real love to Himself, and real faith in His blood, which He will accept, and the judgment-day will ratify, is practical obedience to what He enjoins, He pronounces the man, who merely heareth His sayings, but does not obey them, emphatically, a fool; and awards the palm of wisdom exclusively to the man, who heareth His sayings and doeth them—showing that the hope of the former, however high it may have towered, (and, oh! is not this pre-eminently a day of hearers of our Lord's words, who are not doers also?) shall at last, like the house built on the sand, be cast down, and its self-deceived or hypocritical

professor be overwhelmed, in everlasting destruction, beneath its ruins; while the hope of the latter, like the house built on a rock, shall stand firm and immovable, when the deluge of fire shall descend from heaven, and sweep away every superstructure of hope, which does not rest on the Rock of ages, having inscribed on its walls and gates, "Holiness unto the Lord!"

In perfect harmony with the design, thus manifested throughout the whole of this divine discourse, of exhibiting the sanctifying influence of the truths—the practical character of the doctrines—which He came down from heaven to promulgate, was the uniform tenor of the teaching of our blessed Lord. A few examples out of the multitudes that might be adduced, will suffice to substantiate this assertion. After the Saviour had uttered that most endearing invitation, into which He appears to have infused the very soul of divine compassion and love, and which has, perhaps, attracted more hearts to Him, than any other verse in the compass of Scripture, (Matt. xi. 28, 29, 30)—"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—mark what He immediately subjoins, as if to remind us, that the very essence of the rest, He so tenderly invites us to

seek from Him, consists, not exclusively in a sense of pardon, purchased with His own blood, but, combined with this, in a cordial subjection to His authority, a cheerful compliance with His precepts, and a close conformity to His character. "Take," he says to the weary and heavy-laden sinner—"take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you shall find rest unto your soul!" As if He had said—Oh! ye, who are weary in your fruitless search after satisfying happiness, and heavy laden with the burthen of your sins and sorrows—I know what your harassed souls are yearning for—it is even rest—rest from the terrors of an accusing conscience, and the fear of the wrath of an offended God—rest from all that has hitherto distracted and depressed you—a feeling of solid and substantial peace!

Well, then, come unto Me, and I will give you, in the assurance of the pardon of your sins, and acceptance with God, this long-desired, long-sought rest—even the peace of God, purchased for you with My own blood, which I will shed for the remission of sins. It was for this very purpose I left the bosom of my Father, where I had rested, with infinite complacency, from eternity, and have visited this world, to con-

duct you to everlasting rest—but, for Myself, to sojourn, while on earth, as a houseless wanderer, without where to rest my head! Yet with all my love for you—with all my longing desires to give you rest—with all my omnipotence to accomplish what I desire, I cannot, consistently with the glory of my character, give you the rest you long for, if you continue in the service, in which you have hitherto been engaged. No! you must shake off the yoke of Satan, and take My yoke upon you! You must turn away your ears from the teaching of the tempter, and learn of Me! You must renounce the spirit of pride, and self-sufficiency, and imbibe My spirit, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and thus, and thus alone, can you "find rest unto your soul!" Now how could language more plainly or more awfully impress on us the all-important truth, that, so long as we wear the yoke of Satan—so long as we listen to his voice, and follow his suggestions—so long as we resemble him in the temper of our mind, not even the Almighty Saviour Himself can give us rest; can impart to us really satisfying happiness: because it would be derogatory to His divine glory, as the God, whose essential glory is His holiness, to

exercise His Omnipotence, in making a slave of Satan, unredeemed from his degrading bondage, happy. Is not "His name called Jesus, because He saves His people *from* their sins?" And are we not thus most impressively taught, that if we would indeed be partakers of the rest, which is the peculiar privilege of the faithful followers of Jesus — that rest, which He has purchased for them with His own most precious blood, and which, flowing from the sweet sense of reconciliation with God, through the atonement of His dear Son, begins with the peace of God on earth, and will be perfected in the presence of God in Heaven; we must not merely confide, with unmixed reliance, on the Redeemer's righteousness, but also take the Redeemer's yoke upon us; we must consecrate ourselves, soul and body, to His service; we must learn of Him as our Teacher, and follow Him as our Guide; we must be moulded into the image of His meekness, and lowliness of heart. We must, (as St. Paul so beautifully expresses it,) "put on the Lord Jesus Christ:" for without this, without an unreserved consecration of ourselves to His service, and such an identification of our will, and temper, and judgment, and

affections with His, that we can be truly said to have the Spirit of Christ—we never can find rest unto our souls; we never can enjoy heart-happiness; for this is exclusively the portion of those, who are one with Christ. Gratitude for the pardon, purchased with His blood, must constrain us to live to Him who died for us, or the happiness of His people never can be ours! Oh! would it not be well, if those, who are staunch advocates for sound doctrine, who would shrink with horror from attendance on any but an evangelical ministry, who can repeat most correctly all the articles of an evangelical creed, and profess to rely, with unshaken trust, on the only ground of acceptance, which the Word of God warrants, even the Redeemer's righteousness; and yet exhibit, in their daily and domestic intercourse, such tempers, habitually indulged, as too plainly prove, that they have not taken the Redeemer's yoke upon them, nor learned of Him, who was meek and lowly of heart—would it not be well for *such* to examine afresh the foundation, on which their hope of heaven is built? Have they not too much cause to fear, that the rest, which they fancy they have found unto their souls, is *not* the rest, which Jesus gives His people, and

which is the pledge and foretaste of that eternal rest, which remaineth for them in heaven. But that it is that false and fatal peace, by which Satan deludes and destroys his infatuated victims, lulling them, by its means, into that sleep of security, out of which, if not previously awakened by the Spirit of God, in time to seek the rest which Jesus alone can give, they *must* awake, the moment that death ushers them into the eternal world, to the fearful conviction, that they shall never know one moment of peaceful rest throughout eternity: but must wander, in hopeless agony, over the abyss of the blackness of darkness, seeking rest, but finding none, for ever and ever. And oh! what a fearful eternity does such a prospect unfold to the view! An eternity of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth—an eternity of altogether inconceivable anguish and despair!

How impressively does our blessed Lord inculcate the same truth, when, in reply to one, who told Him, that His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him, He exclaimed (Matt. xii. 50)—"Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? and then, stretching forth His hand towards His

disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brethren! for whosoever shall *do* the will of My Father, which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother." What language could more emphatically declare, that doing the will of His heavenly Father—rendering a cheerful obedience to His commandments—is an indispensable characteristic of those, whom alone Jesus will acknowledge as His own?—beloved by Him, with a love, that can be only faintly imaged by the fondest relationships of earthly love. See also John, xv. 13, 14. Observe, too, the three leading petitions of that incomparable prayer, which the adorable Redeemer Himself has taught us—and say, would the establishment of the Antinomian system accomplish the objects, for which those petitions lead us habitually to pray. Is it by "continuing in sin, that grace might abound?" is it by an unsanctifying reliance on the Redeemer's righteousness, that the "name of God could be hallowed, His kingdom come, and His will be done—on earth, *as it is in heaven?*" Can a single argument be necessary, to prove the absurdity of such a position? And what should we think of a system, which is diametrically opposed to the

very object, which our divine Redeemer has taught us continually to plead for at the Throne of grace? Or how can there be grosser hypocrisy, or a more daring affront to the majesty of the heart-searching God, than daily to repeat this prayer, and yet continue, (whether with or without a religious profession,) to live in a course of systematic opposition to the establishment of His kingdom, and habitual disobedience to the plain and positive injunctions of His holy will? Then turn to that divine discourse, which our blessed Lord held with Nicodemus. Study it attentively, and surely it cannot leave on your mind a lingering doubt, as to the utter insufficiency of an *unsanctifying* trust in the Saviour's righteousness. Surely you must feel that *such* a trust cannot be the mighty and mysterious change, that must be wrought in the soul, by the Holy Spirit, expressed in those all-important words — "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!" Surely nothing short of an entire, a divine change, effected by the operation of the Spirit, passing over the understanding, the will, the heart, the life, can come up to the force of such an expression, or correspond with the

image, which our Lord employs! "Born again! born of the Spirit!" Must not this necessarily imply being, as it were, introduced by the Spirit into a new world—a world of new affections and dispositions, new hopes and fears, new joys and sorrows, new pleasures and pursuits, all bearing this inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord!"—a world, illumined with the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and where every object is brightened with the smile, and consecrated to the glory, of God—in a word, a world, where God in Christ, is all in all!

Observe, also, the obvious import of several of the most important parables of our Lord. Look at the parable of the sower, (Matt. xiii.) It is manifest that the seed, which fell on good ground, exclusively is designed to represent those, who have savingly embraced the truths of the Gospel. Now, what is the distinguishing characteristic of this class, as exhibited in the parable? Is it not their fruitfulness? "That which fell on the good ground are they, which, in an honest and good heart, having received the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit, with patience, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred fold."

The seed sown, in the four cases specified, was the same; but that which peculiarly renders the seed, described as falling on good ground, a suitable emblem of the children of God, is—its bringing forth fruit, with patience, unto perfection! Does not this most explicitly assure us, that the only conclusive evidence, which is warranted by the word of God, that the doctrines of the Gospel have been savingly embraced, is their bringing forth fruit--even the fruit of righteousness, and true holiness! The degrees, in which this fruit may be produced, may differ, and proportionably will the Christian's blood-bought inheritance differ in degrees of glory; but fruitfulness is the only sure proof, that the good seed of the word of life has indeed been planted in the heart, by the Holy Spirit, and taken root there.

Observe too, that the parable plainly points out, as a distinguishing characteristic of the real believer, perseverance in the Christian course unto the end; for it speaks of the good seed, when it falls on ground, previously prepared for its reception, as "bringing forth fruit, *with patience, unto perfection*"—and this is contrasted with the seed, that fell on stony ground, which brought forth some fruit, that

suddenly sprung up, and as suddenly withered away; and with that which fell among thorns, which also brought forth some fruit, but, from the intermixture of thorns, which sprung up along with it, the fruit was choked, and never came to perfection. Now, when we look at all these circumstances, can we, for a moment, doubt that it is the design of our blessed Lord to remind us, that if we would not deceive ourselves in the hope that the seed of the Word has been received by us, in a heart prepared, by divine grace, for its reception, we must take good heed, that it brings forth in us, progressively and perseveringly, the fruits of a holy life, spent in the cheerful consecration of all our talents to the service of God, our Saviour, and the habitual performance of those good works, by which His Gospel may be adorned, and His glory be advanced! And is not the voice of warning thus loudly lifted up in our ears, that no uninfluential knowledge of divine truth, no temporary excitement of feeling, no evanescent emotions of joy, on hearing the glad tidings of the Gospel proclaimed, and appropriating, with unwarranted confidence, all its precious promises and prospects as our own, —nothing, in short, that does not produce

patient perseverance in running the Christian race, set before us—and bringing forth the Christian fruit of good living, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God, can warrant us to conclude, that we have an interest in all the blood-bought blessings of the everlasting covenant—that our steps are tending heavenward—that the Holy Spirit has implanted in our hearts the seed of eternal life!

The same lesson is still more impressively taught in the parables of the talents, (Matt. xxv.) and the pounds (Luke xix.)

May it not, indeed, be fearlessly asserted, that no one could read these parables, in an unprejudiced spirit, unbiassed by partiality to any peculiar dogmas of man's invention, without coming to the conclusion, that it was the specific design of our blessed Lord, in delivering them, to impress on His professing followers, to the end of time, that while His own divine righteousness was to be their exclusive ground of trust, and title to eternal glory, He requires, with uncompromising demand, as the test and manifestation of their faithfulness and love to Himself, and the evidence of their interest in His covenant of grace, with all its precious privileges, the consecration to His service of all

the talents He has committed to their charge That for the want of such a decisive testimony of grateful allegiance to His authority, and affection for His name, no *profession* of love to His person, or trust in His righteousness, can compensate in His sight. That He will invite none to enter into the joy of their Lord in heaven, who have not been willing to enter into the service of their Lord on earth; and that the slothful servant, (he who hid the talent, entrusted to him, in a napkin, and buried it in the ground,) no matter by what pretences he may endeavour to excuse his unfaithfulness or extenuate his sloth, will be cast into outer darkness — condemned, with the more grossly wicked, to everlasting banishment from the presence of that Divine Master, whose servant he professed to be, but whose name he bore, only to dishonour it; and whose talents he received, only to waste them in unprofitableness and sloth!

Now, how is it possible to reconcile with this plain import of these most instructive parables the Antinomian doctrine, that, provided a man rest his hopes of acceptance exclusively on the Saviour's infinitely meritorious righteousness, it matters not whether he may lead an unpro-

fitable, or even an ungodly life? Is *this* the legitimate inference to be drawn from our Lord's gracious words of commendation to the diligent servant?—"Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Is *this* the lesson, intended to be taught by those tremendous words?—"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, where shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth!"

Could our blessed Lord have more expressly asserted, that trust in His merits must be a stimulant to devotedness of heart and life to His service, and not a substitute for it—that those who so ungratefully abuse His grace, will be everlastingly excluded from His presence—and that the very purpose, for which His professing people are entrusted with talents, is that they may employ them, in testimony of their gratitude for all they owe to Him, as instruments for advancing His glory.

But there is something further taught us, in connection with cur subject, by a comparison of those two most interesting and instructive parables. Not merely is the Antinomian heresy condemned, but the important principle is established, that, as in the future state, there will be

degrees of punishment, among the wicked, proportioned to the degrees of guilt, incurred on earth, and which will be graduated by those peculiar aggravations, by which the guilt of a sin, in one man, may exceed ten thousandfold that of the very same sin in another; (as, for instance, the guilt of impurity, in a professing Christian, so immeasurably exceeds that of the benighted heathen, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for the ungodly profaner of the name of Christ ;) so there will also be degrees of happiness and glory, among the righteous, proportioned to the degrees of faithfulness, diligence, and zeal, with which, through the power of the Holy Spirit, they have improved the talents entrusted to their care, for the advancement of their own meetness for heaven, and their beloved Saviour's glory upon earth.

We are aware, that this doctrine requires to be scripturally stated, lest it should appear, in the least degree, to militate against the freedom and sovereignty of divine grace; or to foster a spirit of self-righteousness, usurping the Saviour's exclusive prerogative, and attempting to rob Him of a part of His glory.

We do not forget, what we have so often asserted, that the believer's title to his heavenly inheritance, whatever be the extent of its blessedness, rests exclusively on the Redeemer's righteousness; that his crown of glory, whatever be the degree of its splendour, has been purchased for him entirely by the Redeemer's blood!

We do not forget, that eternal life is, in the fullest sense, a free gift, *altogether undeserved;* and that for every successful effort, which the believer makes, to advance in holiness, or to glorify the Lord, he is wholly indebted to the unmerited grace of God, the Holy Ghost; and that, therefore, when casting his crown before the throne of God, and of the Lamb, he will utterly renounce all idea of merit, in any modification of the word, and acknowledge, with humble gratitude, "By the grace of God I am what I am—and receive this inheritance, as the munificent gift of Him, who has bought me with His own blood—and whose righteousness is my only title to its eternal weight of glory!"

We would also willingly remember, that gratitude to God, our Saviour, for His exceeding great love, in dying for us, should be the mainspring of all a believer's movements, in every

labour he undertakes, for the advancement of that Saviour's glory. Yes, it is the constraining love of Christ, as manifested in Gethsemane's garden, and on Calvary's cross, which so powerfully attracts the Christian to surrender up himself, unreservedly, to the Saviour's service. It is this principle of gratitude which *alone* renders obedience and devotedness at once acceptable to his God, and delightful to his own heart; and oh! it is only the believer's heart can at all conceive the constraining power of that one reflection: "*He died for me.*" But still it is perfectly compatible with all this, that a stimulant to increased diligence, and devotedness, should be supplied by the prospect, (which a comparison of the parables of the talents and the pounds, independently of other strong scriptural testimonies, seems legitimately to warrant,) that there will be degrees of glory and of happiness in heaven, proportioned to the degrees of zeal and exertion in the Saviour's service, and qualification for the enjoyment of the Saviour's presence, attained on earth. That, while every vessel of mercy will be filled, to the utmost extent of its capacity, with satisfying felicity, still the capacity of one vessel will immensely exceed

that of another; for can we doubt, that the glorified spirit of St. Paul will grasp an extent of glory and of bliss, immeasurably beyond what could be grasped by the glorified spirit of an infant, translated the moment of its birth from earth to heaven? Yes! while, as has been beautifully observed, "they, who have been wise for themselves unto salvation," shall shine with a general splendour, resembling "the brightness of the firmament—those who have turned many to righteousness"—those who have displayed peculiar zeal, and self-denial, and devotedness in the Saviour's service, and have thus been made the honoured instruments of bringing many sinners to the knowledge and love of a Saviour's name, they shall shine with a separate and distinct lustre—a pre-eminent and peculiar splendour, "as the stars, for ever and ever!" for will not every sinner, whom they have been instrumental in saving, deepen their bliss, and brighten their crown of glory, throughout eternity? And while all these will gratefully acknowledge that they shine with beams, borrowed from the Sun of righteousness, and reflect *His* radiance, who has fixed them in the firmament of His grace, and while they will *all* shine with a peculiar

brightness, which will distinguish them for ever among the constellations of heaven, still, even of these, will "one star differ from another star in glory!" There will be some of the first magnitude—pre-eminently glorious luminaries, such as "the noble army of martyrs;" those who have cheerfully sacrificed, not merely houses, and lands, and country, and home, but even life itself, to promote their beloved Redeemer's glory. Other stars will be resplendent with lustre, less dazzling indeed than these, but still surpassing the general splendour of the firmament, in the same proportion in which their faithfulness and zeal in improving, to the advancement of His glory, the talents which their divine Master entrusted to them, exceeded those of less faithful, less zealous labourers, in the same blessed cause.

We shall be led to adopt this conclusion, by comparing the two parables, to which we have alluded, which will also impress on us the important lesson, that the degree of future happiness will depend, *not* on the number of talents committed to our charge, *but* on the faithfulness, with which those entrusted to us, whether many or few, have been improved in the service of a Saviour-God! In the parable of the talents,

the *number* entrusted to the two faithful servants is *different*—to one, the Lord gave five, to the other two; but the *improvement* on the part of the servants is the *same;* each doubles the talents given to him; and *here*, the words of gracious commendation, addressed to both, are precisely the same—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

But, in the parable of the pounds, the *number* entrusted to the two faithful servants is the *same*, but the *improvement* on the part of the servants is *different*—each received one pound, but the first increased it ten-fold—"Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds." The second increased it five-fold—"Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds." And now, what is the result? What is the award to each of these servants? Mark it well! To him, whose pound hath gained *ten pounds*, the Lord says, "Be thou ruler over *ten cities*." To him, whose pound hath gained *five pounds*, he says, "Be thou ruler over *five cities!*" Could *this* have been an accidental coincidence? Can we fairly regard it as a mere unimportant circumstance, having no connection with the main design of the parable, but merely

filling up, as it were, the features of the picture? Surely we must at once pronounce this a most unwarrantable assumption; and are entitled, by every fair process of reasoning, to infer, that it was our Lord's purpose to inculcate the lesson, that while all is bestowed as a free gift, in the riches of wholly unmerited grace, exclusively as the purchase of the Redeemer's blood—the reward of His righteousness—the degree of happiness, which will be enjoyed by His faithful servants, in that state for which the present life is preparatory, will be proportioned to the degree of diligence in service, and advancement in holiness, which they have here attained; while the principle of grateful love is still the *motive*, which animates and sustains them in all the self-denying and unwearied devotedness and zeal, with which, in the strength of divine grace, they thankfully rejoice to labour, during their earthly career, by the consecration of all the talents entrusted to them, to advance their Divine Master's glory.

In truth, the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian is, that he feels that "he is not his own, for he has been bought with a price," and therefore desires, in all things, to glorify Him, who has bought him with His own blood!

He feels that he owes to Him, who, at *such a price*, has redeemed him from eternal misery, and purchased for him eternal glory, a debt of infinite obligation, which will, throughout eternity, be everlastingly deepening? Yes; it is love to Christ, which is the master-passion in the Christian's soul; and it is this which makes obedience enjoyment, and renders a Saviour's service its own reward! For such is the happiness which, by His own gracious appointment, necessarily results from grateful devotedness to His service, and advancing assimilation to His character, that increased measures of this devotedness, and this assimilation, must necessarily be accompanied with increased measures of happiness here, and throughout eternity. Thus we see, that while the Saviour's love is the motive, and the Saviour's glory the aim, of His people's devotedness and zeal, there is such a close connection between the measure of meetness for the enjoyment of heaven's happiness here attained, and the measure of that happiness hereafter to be enjoyed, as stamps a deep interest and importance on every successive step of the Christian's journey through this world, since each is attended with results to his highest interests, that will extend throughout eternity!

This view of the subject is the one I am desirous of establishing, from the importance with which it invests every moment of the believer's earthly pilgrimage, when contemplated in connection with his everlasting welfare; and thus incidentally strengthens the position which it is the main object of this work to uphold, that saving faith in the Redeemer's righteousness must be living faith, working by love, to advance His glory, and will exercise a sanctifying influence over the believer's character and conduct. Still further to guard the statement from misconception, and to exhibit its beneficial tendencies, when scripturally understood, I would subjoin the following extract from Doctor O'Brien's sermons on Justification, which at once illustrates and enforces the sentiment, which I am anxious to establish and impress :—

"In teaching us to regard life as a state of discipline—a state that is, in which character is formed by conduct—revelation virtually establishes a connexion between our conduct here, and our destiny hereafter, which seems well fitted to exercise distinctly a concern for our own interests. We cannot look upon the diversities of moral character that surround us, whether among believers or unbelievers, without feeling sure that men pass through life, very differently injured or improved by its teaching, and arrive at its close in very different moral states.

If scriptural confirmation were needed for a truth so obvious to common observation, the Lord expressly tells us, that of those who do bring forth good fruit, some bring forth an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty; and that, on the other hand, a return to the thraldom of sin, after a temporary escape from its yoke, can make the last state of a man worse than the first; and that some are two-fold more children of hell than others.

"But if this difference exist at the close of life, it is surely impossible to avoid believing that it continues after life is ended. Unless we suppose that God places us here for the formation of character; provides potent means to effect its formation; employs the events of life, the revelation of His will, the operation of His Spirit, to promote this design; brings all means, internal and external, natural and preternatural, to bear upon man to effect this end, and then, when life is over, interferes by an act of power to undo all that this elaborate system of forces had effected; unless, I say, we are prepared to adopt this unreasonable and wild supposition, we must believe that men enter the next world—both the great divisions of it—as they leave this, in widely different degrees of moral advancement, and of moral degradation.

"Now, this, fairly considered, is equivalent to asserting that they enjoy there very different degrees of happiness, and suffer there very different degrees of misery. For under every notion of the happiness of the future state, much of it must be supposed to consist in the exercise of those principles, in the indulgence of those affections, which it is the business of moral discipline here to invigorate and to purify. A more advanced state of moral improvement is, therefore, but another name for a higher capacity for this kind of happiness—and surely with Him, 'in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore'—the highest capacity for happiness must be the highest enjoyment of it—so that you see, that unless we suppose an express provision in heaven for excluding men from degrees of happiness, of which they have

been, by God's appointment, rendered capable upon earth, we must suppose a wide distinction in the enjoyment of saints in the kingdom of glory!"[1]

There is another attestation to the operative influence, the practical results, of all genuine love to Christ, which is too important to be passed over, and which invests the subject with a peculiar solemnity and force.

"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations." All the assembled multitudes shall then be divided into two mighty congregations, the righteous placed at His right hand—and the wicked at His left. "Then shall the King say to them on His right hand—Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" And now mark, what does He subjoin to those words, which breathe, as it were, the very essence of heaven's blessedness? Oh! study it attentively, and then say, how could our blessed Lord more

[1] How perfectly compatible all this is with the deepest humility, and the most undivided dependance on the Redeemer's merits; with the confession of Hooker—"the little fruit that we have in righteousness, it is, God knoweth, corrupt and unsound"—and with the apostolic prayer, "that we may be found in Him—even the Lord Jehovah our Righteousness—not having our own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God!"—is msot satisfactorily shown in the same sermon, (the ninth,) to which, as well as the following, and the most valuable note, appended to the former, I would most earnestly entreat the reader's special attention.

emphatically announce, that, in that awful day, when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and all His professing people are gathered before Him, He will not recognize as acceptable in His sight, any *profession* of love to His name, or reliance on His righteousness, which cannot produce, as incontestable evidences of its sincerity, the fruits of righteousness and charity, a temper and spirit congenial with His own, and feelings and offices of benevolent and practical compassion, shewn to His suffering people for His sake, according to the measure of opportunity and means which He has Himself vouchsafed. How could the Redeemer more expressly record such a determination, than by those wonderful words? "Come, ye blessed of My Father: for *I* was an hungered, and ye gave *Me* meat—a stranger, and ye took *Me* in—sick, and in prison, and ye visited *Me*."

Deeply, indeed, are we convinced, that these manifestations of love to Himself, testified by the sympathy shewn, and the relief administered, to His poor suffering members, do not form, in *any even the smallest conceivable degree*, the ground, on which the righteous are pronounced the blessed of the Father, or the title,

by which they are privileged to possess the inheritance, prepared for them, *from the founda-tion of the world*—prepared, therefore, before they had performed the works, here recorded as the testimonials of their love to Jesus. For this were to contradict the whole Gospel-scheme, and to give to the believer's works the glory, *exclusively* due to the Saviour's finished work, on which *alone* the Christian is to rest his claims to the inheritance among the saints in light. Nor should it be overlooked, that the thoughts of His beloved people are represented as so altogether unoccupied with any thing they have ever been enabled, by divine grace, to do for Him, in token of their gratitude—so entirely engrossed with all He has done for them, in His stupendous love, in washing them from their sins in His own blood, and making them kings and priests unto the Father, that on hearing those gracious words from His lips, they break forth into the language of unfeigned amazement, that He should take notice of any poor worthless services of theirs! "Lord! when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee?" But still, assuredly, by selecting these good works, as the accredited testimo-nials of the sincerity of His people's professed

love to Himself, and trust in His righteousness, and noticing them with such distinguished honour on *such* an occasion, our blessed Lord has solemnly declared, that He indispensably requires, and will most graciously regard them, as acceptable evidences of that divinely implanted principle of gratitude to Himself, which prompts His people to perform all these labours of love for His sake, and which should ever be enthroned in their hearts, in its rightful supremacy, as the governing principle of their lives.

And is not the necessity of such a practical proof of the sincerity of a profession of love to the Saviour yet more impressively enforced, when we turn to the tremendous sentence, passed on those, who, in that awful day, shall be placed at the left hand of Him, that sitteth on the throne, and hear those appalling words— "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels?"— Addressed to whom? Is it the openly profane, the abandoned profligate, those who have been stained with the pollutions of gross sins? No, there is not a word of allusion to such characters. It is as if it were altogether unnecessary to advert to *them*; it must be so manifest from

the most explicit assurances of the Word of God, as well as the whole constitution of the Gospel-scheme, that *they* could have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. But oh! what a fearful warning is addressed to all unsanctified professors of an evangelical creed, to all, whose professed trust in the Redeemer's righteousness does not bring forth the fruits of a living faith, evidenced by works of grateful obedience, and labours of Christian love for His Name's sake, when we hear the Son of God, the compassionate Saviour, the Almighty Judge—after He has passed that fearful sentence on those at His left hand—"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;" assigning as a ground of their condemnation, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat! I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink! I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in! naked, and ye clothed Me not! sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not!"

In what appalling language is the utter uselessness of an unsanctified knowledge of evangelical truth; an uninfluential reliance on the Saviour's righteousness, proclaimed by the lips of the Almighty Judge, in those inconceivably tremendous words—"Depart from Me, ye

cursed into everlasting fire!" addressed to professors, of whom it is only recorded, as the ground of their sentence of condemnation, that they neglected to relieve His poorer members for His sake; thus incontestably proving, that, amidst all their high-sounding profession, there was no real love to Himself enthroned in their hearts.

Was it not to inculcate the same awful lesson, that the adorable Redeemer blighted, with His withering curse, the barren fig-tree, as a type and emblem of the unfruitful professor, and of the fearful consequences of His curse; for behold, as soon as His voice pronounced the fatal words, immediately the fig-tree withered away!

Is there not, in that blighting curse, a voice that should speak trumpet-tongued to every Antinomian professor, and warn him, that no profusion of the leaves of an empty profession, (however flourishing they may appear in the eyes of man,) will avail with the Divine Master of the vineyard, in the absence of the fruit of righteousness and true holiness, to prevent the barren tree from being withered by His curse; cut down and cast into the fire—even that fire that never shall be quenched.

See the same truth strikingly illustrated in the opening verses of the 15th chapter of St. John.

Is not the same solemn warning lifted up in those most awakening words, (Matt. xviii. 8.) "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee—it is better for thee to enter into life, halt or maimed, than having two hands, or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire!" How could our blessed Lord more explicitly declare, that we cannot enter into life, even that eternal life, which He has Himself purchased for His people with His own blood, and carry our unmortified corruptions along with us. And that, profess and expect what we may, if we will not, in the strength of divine grace, cut off our bosom-lusts, we must ourselves be cut off from the presence of His glory—if we will not cast away our sins, we must ourselves be cast away for ever—if we will not depart from iniquity, He will say to us in that day, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"

What a fearful confirmation of this is supplied by that awful declaration (John, v. 28, 29.) Is not this also the obvious import of His faithful admonition (Matt. xvi. 24.)—"If any man

will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily*, and follow Me!" Is not self-denial, is not the daily crucifixion of the flesh, is not the following of Jesus, plainly set forth here, as the characteristic badge of His faithful disciples? And in what path can they *follow Him*, but in the path of self-denial—of true holiness—of cheerful submission to His Father's will, and *entire devotedness* to His Father's service? When He describes His sheep, as (John, x. 27.) hearing His voice, and *following Him*, does He not, in the strongest conceivable language, represent, walking in the path of holiness as an indispensable mark of His sheep? If they are known by following Him, must they not be treading the path of holiness? For could greater blasphemy be uttered, than for one, walking in the ways of sin, to profess to be following Christ? Does *He* lead His people in the way of sin? Does He go before them in the path of sloth, or self-indulgence? How, then, can the Antinomian professor dare to pretend, that he is one of Christ's sheep, when the Saviour has so explicitly declared, "My sheep follow *Me!*" Surely that one expression were enough to brand blasphemy on the Antinomian's hope of

heaven, no matter how scriptural the foundation on which it professedly may rest! As long, then, as it remains on record, as the Saviour's own description of His sheep, that they follow Him—unless He can consent to lead them in the ways of sin, or can be mistaken as to the character of those whom He will Himself recognise, as the sheep of His flock, and place at His right hand, in the day, when He sitteth on the throne of His glory, it must remain an eternal truth, that no hope of salvation can be scriptural, which does not, while renouncing all dependence, for acceptance with God, on every thing, except the Redeemer's sufferings and righteousness, produce, as the evidence of its divine implantation, the faithful following of the blessed steps of His most holy life!

Turn now to the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel! Look to that sublimest pattern of intercessory prayer, which the divine Saviour has there bequeathed as a rich legacy of His love to the Christian Church! Remember *when* He poured out that prayer—and surely you must feel convinced that the object for which He pleaded so earnestly, at *such* a time, on behalf of His beloved disciples, must have

been one, in His estimation, of paramount importance! Now, look to the 17th, 19th and 21st verses. Mark those words, "Sanctify them through Thy truth! Thy word is truth!" Could *such* a prayer have been offered up, by the Son of God, if the sanctification of His people had not been deemed by Him essential to His own glory, as the Divine Mediator, and to their happiness, as the objects of His redeeming love? Or without that sanctification being wrought in them by the Holy Ghost, could such a prayer be considered as answered? Or could He have offered up that prayer in vain? Surely, then, an unholy professor of the most thoroughly evangelical creed is not one of His true disciples, for he has not been sanctified through the truth—and could not, without blasphemy, be called one with Christ!

One further extract from our adorable Redeemer's declarations, on this all-important subject, will suffice. In that memorable conversation with His beloved disciples, recorded in those three most precious chapters of St. John's Gospel—(xiv., xv., and xvi.,) held under such peculiarly affecting circumstances, as stamp a pre-eminent interest and importance on every word He uttered, He has distinctly

declared—"*If* a man love Me, he *will* keep My words. He that hath My commandments, and *keepeth* them, *he it is* that loveth Me! He that *loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings!*" Now surely, these are plain unequivocal declarations. There is no possibility of mistaking their meaning. No sophistry can explain away their obvious import, and no comment add weight to their intrinsic force! May we not, with reverence, say, that the Redeemer Himself could not have chosen stronger or plainer language, to convey the impression, that all professed love towards Himself will be tried by this test—"does it produce obedience to His commandments?" and that, consequently, that profession of love to Him, which cannot stand this test, whatever may be the plausibility with which it is maintained, or the feelings with which it is accompanied, or the hopes to which it may give birth, will be rejected by Him, as a hypocritical pretence, or a self-deceiving delusion!

In the face of this simple declaration, what a mockery, yea! what blasphemy, for the Antinomian to pretend to love the Saviour, and to have a confident hope of eternal glory, resting on His righteousness, while, by disobedience to His

commands, he is convicted, by the Saviour's own words—"If a man love Me, he will keep My words!"—as a liar—falsely professing, with his lips, to love Jesus; while proving, by the unequivocal testimony of his life, that the love of a crucified Saviour is an utter stranger to his heart.

I cannot but consider this test, thus proposed by our Lord, to try the sincerity of all professed love to Himself, as of peculiar value, both from its simplicity, bringing it to the level of the humblest capacity; and because it supplies, in itself, a sufficient antidote for the poison of Antinomian licentiousness, by exposing the hollowness of that profession of love to the Saviour, which does not produce an obedient life.

Nor can I forbear remarking the peculiar wisdom, displayed by our blessed Lord, in selecting *such* a test. It cannot lead us into the bewildering mazes of metaphysical speculation, to determine the precise character or intensity of our feelings of love to the Son of God—a test which might easily mislead, giving, in many instances, unwarranted confidence to the ardent and enthusiastic, and unnecessary alarm to those of a soberer spirit, or a colder temperament. It holds out no encouragement to mystical rap-

tures, or over-wrought fervour, as the decisive proof of genuine love to Christ. It is not an ignis fatuus gleam, to dazzle and delude, but a guiding light to the feet, and a lamp to the path, to direct our steps in wisdom's ways of pleasantness and peace. Yes, it is a sober, a practical test—in the application of which the humble, honest-hearted inquirer can never be deceived. And it proves, what cannot be too frequently enforced on our recollection, that nothing will be accepted in the Saviour's sight, as an evidence of cordial love to Himself, and heartfelt thankfulness for all the inestimable benefits of His precious blood-shedding; in lieu of grateful and habitual obedience to His commands. And does not the analogy of all true earthly affection, to which He so often appeals, to shadow out His own unutterable love to His people, enable us at once fully to appreciate and apply this test, in judging of our professed love to Jesus?

Does not all true love uniformly produce a desire to please the beloved object? Can a child truly love a parent, and not testify that love by cheerful obedience to that parent's commands? Would you believe a child's profession of attachment to a parent, who had lavished on

him the tenderest love, if that child displayed habitual indifference to his parent's wishes, and systematic disobedience to his commands? And can that profession of love to the Saviour be sincere, which does not give birth to a grateful solicitude to keep His words, and to obey His will?

Can any conceivable reason be assigned, why the Son of God should be the *only* Being, who can be sincerely loved, without a desire to please Him emanating from that love? Must not reason unhesitatingly answer, assuredly not! And has not the Saviour Himself answered the question, in a manner, that can neither be evaded nor misunderstood: "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." And is not, I repeat it, the Antinomian's profession of attachment to the Saviour thus proved to be a lie, and his hope of heaven a hypocrite's pretence, or a self-deceiver's dream? See 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

And now, when we glance back retrospectively at the substance of the scriptural testimony on this subject, are we not warranted in coming to the following conclusion—That the Gospel is a glorious manifestation of the love of God, designed to promote the everlasting happiness of man; that it is a divine remedy for *all*

the evils, which sin has introduced into our world; that it is a stupendous display of the divine wisdom, exhibited in a scheme of redemption, by which the bestowment of peace to man on earth is made the means of bringing glory to God in the highest—and all the divine attributes are not merely harmoniously reconciled, (with their highest claims fully satisfied,) in the salvation of sinners, but, through the infinite value of the sacrifice of the cross, infinitely exalted and glorified, as there is poured around them all the splendour of a brighter display, and stamped on them the dignity of a loftier vindication—that the divine law is more magnified, and the divine character and government more honoured by the salvation of a single sinner, through the sufferings and righteousness of Him, who died on Calvary, than they would have been by the everlasting destruction of all the myriads of mankind, while pardon is conveyed to the sinner through *such* a medium, as inspires him with the deepest abhorrence of sin, and thus, so far from encouraging him in transgression for the future, constrains him, from the sweetly irresistible influence of gratitude for such unmerited and unfathomable love, to love, obey, and glorify the God of his salvation—

that the object of the everlasting Father, in giving His own Son, as a propitiation for our sins, was, by such an overwhelming display of His love, to subdue our natural enmity against Him, and win back to Himself the alienated affections of our revolted hearts; that the object of the eternal Son, in descending from heaven, and sojourning, and suffering, and dying upon earth, was to remove the barriers, which sin had opposed to the flowing forth of the love of God the Father towards a guilty world, by offering up *such* a sacrifice, to satisfy the offended justice of Jehovah, as would enable Him to be just, even in justifying the sinner, and by bringing in an everlasting righteousness, to be placed to the account of all His believing people, for their complete justification, and as their exclusive title to the possession of a heavenly inheritance; and, at the same time, that, by His infinitely meritorious sufferings and obedience unto death, He might open a way for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who should come, in His name, to take up his abode in the hearts of His people, to impart to them His own pure, peaceful, loving nature—to enable them to crucify the flesh, with all its sinful appetites and lusts—to conform them to

the image of the Son of God, and make them meet for a holy heaven! That thus each divine Person of the adorable Trinity sustains unspeakably glorious and gracious offices, in the economy of man's redemption—and each is equally entitled to the believer's everlasting gratitude and praise, for the amazing love manifested towards him by his Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier—the triune, ever blessed God of his salvation.

CHAPTER V.

PRACTICAL PREACHING.

Among the causes, that may have contributed to produce the tendency to Antinomianism, which is too visible in what is called the religious world, in our day, is the want of a sufficiently practical character, in much of the evangelical preaching, which so extensively prevails.

I do not mean by this, that direct Antinomian doctrines are inculcated; for this I believe is very unfrequently the case; if, indeed, any examples are to be found in the pulpits of our Scriptural Church, or among our orthodox dissenting brethren. Nor do I mean, that it is not distinctly stated, that the faith, which lays hold of the Redeemer's righteousness as the alone meritorious ground of the sinner's justification before God, must be an operative sanctifying principle, "working by love," to the production of that "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

hend, as to the deficiency of practical enforcement in evangelical preaching, in our day, is this, that it deals, in many instances, too much in generalities, and does not sufficiently follow the apostolical example, and go into the details of Christian duty, in the various, relationships of life ; or exhibit, with sufficient clearness and particularity of statement, that style of character, and course of conduct, which a child of God should adopt, in order to act consistently with his high and holy calling, and to adorn the doctrines of God our Saviour. The necessity of faith, working by love, is insisted on; but the manner, in which it ought to work, under the influence of the divine principle of love, is not always set forth so distinctly, as to enable even the sincere inquirer to perceive, what he ought to do, in the daily employment of his time and talents, for the purpose of glorifying the Saviour that he loves.

The necessity of holiness, as a fruit and mark of a saving faith—the seal of the Holy Spirit, restamping the divine image on the soul —and a qualification for the enjoyment, though not a title for the possession, of a heavenly inheritance, among the saints in light, is also inculcated, but we fear it is not always suffi-

ciently explained, wherein this holiness essentially consists. What are its characteristic features—what its peculiar influence on the understanding, the heart, the tongue, the temper, the life—how it may be most effectually cherished, and exemplified. What things tend to retard, and what to promote, its progress—and what should be the Christian's daily walk and work, in order to arrive at the highest degree of holiness and devotedness, which can be attained on earth, through the sanctifying and strengthening operation of God, the Holy Ghost.

Again, the character of the Saviour is declared to be the only perfect pattern—the only one, which His people can, in all cases and circumstances, follow with implicit confidence; and conformity to this divine character is set forth, as the distinguishing badge of the true believer, the uniform result of the indwelling of the Spirit, and the indispensable evidence of a saving trust in the sacrifice and righteousness of Him, who has left His people, in His life, an example that they should follow His steps, as well as purchased for them, by His obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, an inheritance in heaven, "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." But, while conformity to

the Saviour's character is *thus* set forth, is there not too much reason to fear, that the lovely features of this divine character are not sufficiently brought out, in distinct and detailed exhibition. The various graces which shone, with such celestial attractiveness, in the character of the Son of God, that they have compelled infidelity itself to confess His Divinity —extorting from its great apostle the acknowledgment, that "the life and death of the Son of Mary were those of a God"—these graces are not, it is to be feared, sufficiently developed, in much of the evangelical preaching of our day; or proposed, as frequently and fully as they ought to be, as the object of the believer's habitual and prayerful contemplation, and constant endeavours, in the strength of divine grace, to exhibit their counterpart, in his own character and conversation.

The consequences, that have resulted from this want of a more distinct and detailed exhibition of the various duties of the Christian life, and the various features of the Christian character, have been extremely prejudicial to the spiritual welfare of the Church of Christ; and have tended to promote, what has with truth been pronounced the besetting sin of the pro-

fessing religious world in our day—namely, the uninfluential, unsanctifying profession of evangelical truth. Many also, even sincere inquirers on the way to Zion, are left, by such general statements of the necessity of following after holiness, and doing all to the glory of God, and being conformed to the character of Christ, in much ignorance and perplexity, as to the path, which they ought to pursue, in many of the difficult situations, and trying circumstances, in which they are often placed. In such preaching, there is often comparatively little to give them clear and definite views of the nature and extent of Christian morality, based on Christian principles and animated by Christian motives. Stirred up by glowing descriptions of a Saviour's love, (and we are fully aware, no tongue of man or angel could speak too warmly on such a theme!) animated by awakening appeals to their hearts, on His behalf, (and we admit that no appeals, on such a subject, can be too awakening, or too urgently enforced,) they appear sincerely solicitous to be instrumental in promoting His glory—and yet receive so little instruction, as to the details of the Christian walk and warfare, by which that end may be attained, that they continue, year after year,

attending a Gospel ministry, and yet making no perceptible progress in the divine life—exhibiting no decisive evidences of growth in grace—no increasing conformity to the high and holy standard, set before them in the Gospel—no brightening resemblance to the character, no deepening devotedness to the service, of a Saviour-God! Follow many modern professors to the sanctuary, on the Sabbath-day—they are all awakened attention to the preacher, while he is expatiating on the stupendous manifestations of the Redeemer's love, or the precious privileges, and glorious prospects, of His peculiar people. Watch their countenances! With what joy are they irradiated, while themes, such as these, are descanted upon, with heart-touching eloquence; and every feeling of their souls, kindling into the glowing but evanescent enthusiasm of an excited imagination, thrills responsive to the stirring exhortations and appeals of the preacher's voice. Listen to their conversation, when the subject of religion is brought forward; and what a character of deep and heartfelt interest in the sacred theme seems to be impressed on every word they utter! You would suppose that a Saviour's love reigned, in undisputed sovereignty, on the throne of their

hearts; and that their every desire and solicitude was absorbed in the grateful anxiety to glorify His dear and honoured name! Then watch their employment of their time—their discharge of their various duties—domestic and social. Observe the tempers they display, when surprised by trials, or irritated by provocations. Listen to their conversation, when religion is not professedly the theme. Follow them, in fine, through the various developments of their character, in the course of a single day, and will you not often be compelled, in wondering disappointment, to exclaim—Are these the devout attendants on the Gospel minister, who seemed to hang in rapture on his lips, while he spake to them of Jesus, and of all His wondrous love? Where, then, are the evidences of that grateful love to Him, which seemed to light up their countenances, while listening to the precious theme? Where is the jealous economy of time, where the unreserved consecration of talents, for the advancement of His glory? Where are the features of like-mindedness with Christ? Where His unmurmuring resignation under trials? Where His unconquerable patience under provocations? What traces of conformity to His character can be discovered?

What marks of His humility and gentleness—His meekness and lowliness of heart? What mean these wasted hours—this frivolous discourse—these discontented complainings—these outbreakings of pride—this peevishness when disappointed—this passion when provoked? And oh! is it possible, that these bitter reproaches—these uncharitable insinuations—these unmerciful comments on the faults or failings of those whom they profess to believe to be brethren in Christ, are coming from lips, which were lately so eloquent in the praise of Him, who said—"By *this* shall all men know, that ye are *My* disciples, *if* ye have *love* one to another?" Can it be, that their religious feelings are a kind of Sabbath-costume, which they wear, only while in the house of God, and put off, during the week, unless when they attend a week-day lecture there, and then resume, for this purpose, their Sabbath-dress?

Now, I do not mean, by the characters I am here describing, deliberate hypocrites—who attend the sanctuary, and assume an aspect of deep devotion, "to be seen of men," for the purpose of accomplishing some selfish end, and thus incur the appalling guilt of pretending a peculiar zeal for the *glory of God*, as a means

of advancing *their own.* No; I mean those, who are rather to be suspected of deceiving themselves than of intending to deceive others —those, whose imagination and feelings are excited, when the preacher expatiates on the boundlessness of the Saviour's love, or the privileges of His people—but who do not exhibit, in a consistent display of conformity to the Saviour's character, and devotedness to His service, those genuine fruits of a living faith, which are always produced, when it is implanted in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost! And my object, at present, is to consider, how far the want of a more practical mode of preaching, among those, who, in all essential points set forth the truth, as it is in Jesus, may have conduced to the production of the evil we have noticed, and which cannot be too deeply deplored.

Should these pages, then, meet the eye of any brother in the ministry, whose preaching may have thus tended to promote this spirit of self-deception among his hearers, and to retard the growth of grace and godliness, even in the sincere and faithful followers of the Lamb, to that brother-minister I would humbly and affectionately say—Dear brother, allow me, in

Christian faithfulness and love, to suggest the following considerations:

If you would indeed feel warranted to hope for the blessing of God on your ministry, ever remember, and follow the advice of a late distinguished servant of God, (the Rev. Legh Richmond,) "Never to preach a single sermon, from which an unenlightened hearer might not learn the plan of salvation, though he never afterwards heard another discourse."

Let me also affectionately press on your most attentive consideration the eloquent appeal of one of the brightest ornaments of our Scriptural Church—the great and good Bishop Reynolds. "Studiously and conscientiously apply yourself to the heavenly skill of preaching. So convince of sin, the stain, the pollution of it, the curse and malediction whereunto the soul is exposed by it, that your hearers may be awakened, and humbled, and effectually forewarned to flee from the wrath to come. So convince of the all-sufficient righteousness, and unsearchable riches of Christ; the excellency of His knowledge, the immeasurableness of His love, the preciousness of His promises, the fellowship of His sufferings, the power of His resurrection, the beauties of His holiness, the

easiness of His yoke, the sweetness of His peace, the joy of His salvation, the hope of His glory, that the hearts of your hearers may burn within them, and they may fly, like doves unto their windows, for shelter and sanctuary, into the arms of such a Redeemer, who is able and willing 'to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him:' that they may, with all ready obedience, and by the constraining power of the love of Christ, yield up themselves to the government of this Prince of peace, by whom the prince of this world is judged, and cast out; his works destroyed; and we, for this end, bought with a price, that we should not be our own, but His that bought us; nor henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him, who died for us, and rose again! Preach Christ Jesus the Lord! Determine to know nothing among your people but Christ crucified. Let His name and grace, His Spirit and love, triumph in the midst of all your sermons. Let your great end be to glorify Him in the heart, to render Him amiable and precious in the eyes, of His people; to lead them to Him, as a sanctuary to protect them; a propitiation to reconcile them; a treasure to enrich them; a Physician to heal them; an Advocate to pre-

sent them, and their services, to God—as wisdom to counsel them, as righteousness to justify, as sanctification to renew, as redemption to save! Let Christ be the diamond to shine in the bosom of all your sermons!"

In full accordance with these exhortations of this truly Christian Bishop, I would say—Dear Christian brother in the ministry—Seek, through the enlightening influences of the divine and only infallible Teacher, the Holy Spirit, to be enabled to understand clearly, and to explain to your people fully, the distinctive characteristics and offices of the law and the Gospel; that you may so set forth the terrors of the law, as to lead your hearers to trust in the grace of the Gospel; and so exhibit the grace of the Gospel, as to enforce evangelical obedience to the precepts of the law! Shew them how the Holy Spirit makes use of the law, as a pioneer, to prepare the way for the reception of the Gospel—as a schoolmaster, to conduct the sinner to Christ! Shew them how the Spirit employs the law, in convincing the soul of sin, which is the transgression of the law—in bringing it in guilty before God—teaching it to feel its need of pardon, and a better righteousness than its own, for acceptance with Jehovah—and thus leading

it to embrace, with heartfelt gratitude and joy, the glad tidings of the Gospel; to fly for refuge from the curse of a broken law to a Saviour's outstretched arms; and to cling to His cross, and repose on His righteousness, with a cordial, and undivided trust. Then shew them how the law, thus magnified and made honorable by the Divine Redeemer's obedience to its requirements, and endurance of its penalties, is endeared to the affections of the renewed heart of the child of God, who now contemplates the Lawgiver under the attractive aspect of his covenant-God and Father. How the Holy Spirit enables him to render a grateful and cheerful compliance with all its precepts, as the expressions of a beloved Father's will. How the law, though he does not, in the least degree, look for justification, through his own obedience to its requirements, still continues to be the rule of his life, the regulator of his actions, as the law of his God, which he loves, because it is holy, just, and good—and his earnest desire is, that the inmost recesses of his heart may be pervaded by its power, through the sanctifying operation of the Holy Ghost. Thus explain to your people, that the proper office of the law is to exhibit the preciousness

of the Gospel; and that the Gospel establishes, on the firmest basis, the authority of the law, and makes the fullest provision for cordial obedience to all which it enjoins.

Allow me, also, affectionately to remind you, dear brother, that you cannot too earnestly impress on your people the cheering truth, that, on the cross of Calvary, God's co-eternal co-equal Son offered up "a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world;" and that, therefore, there can be no sins, however awfully aggravated, for which that sacrifice is not an infinitely sufficient expiation; for that the blood of Him, who was "God manifest in the flesh," can blot out transgressions of the very deepest dye; and to deny this, by unbelieving despair, under the garb of humility, is to offer the deepest insult to a Saviour-God. You cannot, therefore, too urgently entreat of even the vilest sinners to come at once to the fountain, opened in the divine Redeemer's blood, for sin and for uncleanness—with the full assurance that He will *in no wise* cast them out!—For that He invites *all*, without exception or limitation, "that are weary and heavy laden, to come unto Him, and He will give them rest!" and that no previous qualifica-

tions are required, to entitle them to come to Jesus, or warrant them to confide in Him; but that they are privileged to come to Him, at once, to cast themselves, as miserable sinners, at the foot of His cross—that He may deliver them from the guilt and punishment of sin, by the sprinkling of His atoning blood; and from the love and power of sin, by the influences of His sanctifying grace! Yea! and further, you are called upon to exhort them, with all earnestness of entreaty, to flee at once to this infinitely precious Saviour, for shelter from the wrath to come—because, as the everlasting Father has, in His stupendous love to sinners, given His own, His only Son to the death of the cross, as a propitiation for their sins, to reject the Son of His love, and spurn the salvation, which He has wrought out by His meritorious sufferings, and obedience unto death, is to offer the most aggravated affront to God the Father, by pouring contempt on the love, the sufferings, the blood of His well-beloved Son. And, therefore, they should ever remember, (and you, as their minister, should ever remind them,) that they are not only *permitted* but *commanded*, to believe in the love of God so fully manifested in the gift of His dear Son, as an all-suffi-

cient sacrifice for sin; and to confide in that sacrifice with a cheerful trust, for the pardon of all their sins, however deeply dyed, or long-continued they may have been.

If, therefore, you would indeed desire to be instrumental in accomplishing the great object, for which the Christian ministry was appointed —even to draw sinners to the Almighty Saviour, that He may save them, with that glorious and everlasting salvation, which He has purchased with His own infinitely precious blood—you must ever keep in remembrance His own declaration—"I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me!"—with the comment of the Holy Spirit, "*this* He spake, signifying what death He should die!" You must, therefore, with the great apostle, resolve to know nothing among your people, but "Christ crucified," as the great subject of your preaching, taking the words in their full scriptural sense! You must make this your favourite theme! You must lift up the cross, in all your ministrations, exhibiting it as the only foundation of a sinner's hopes —as the most powerful incentive to the believer's devotedness of heart and life to the love and service of the God of his salvation!

The cross, the cross, you must ever remem-

ber, is the great spiritual magnet, by which the heart of the sinner is drawn to a Saviour-God. It is by the belief of the stupendous love *there* displayed, when brought with power to the sinner's heart, by the Holy Spirit, that the natural enmity of that heart against God is subdued, and changed into penitential contrition, and grateful love; and thus the surest foundation laid for a holy, obedient, devoted, heavenly life. Nor is there a single Christian doctrine, or Christian duty, which cannot be most powerfully, and which should not be habitually enforced, from principles and motives, which derive all their charm and efficacy from that cross! Therefore is it, that you should fully adopt the apostle's language, as the motto of all your ministrations, and exclaim, "God forbid, that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" and exhibit that cross in the very foreground of every representation of divine truth—Yea! set it forth as the sun and centre of your whole system of ministerial instructions, round which all other doctrines harmoniously revolve, and from which they derive all their light, and warmth, and glory! You cannot, therefore, dear Christian brother in the ministry, be too fond of

Christ crucified, as your theme, in public preaching, or private converse with the flock, committed to your charge: nor can you lift up the cross, with too frequent a proclamation of its amazing message of redeeming love!

Nor should you neglect, if you would follow the guidance of the word of God, to give that degree of prominence, which the Scriptures unquestionably give, to Christ glorified, as well as Christ crucified! Frequently set forth the glorious subject of the second advent of the adorable Redeemer, exhibited in its scriptural character, with all the magnificent prospects it unfolds to the eye of faith, of the glory to be then revealed, as a most animating incentive to the believer's diligence, devotedness, and zeal in his Divine Master's service—a most powerful sustainer of his patience, amidst trials and persecutions—and an abundant source of the most delightful hopes, and precious consolations—as well as a most persuasive motive to urge the sinner to flee, *without delay*, to the shelter of a Saviour's arms, from that storm of divine wrath, which will burst *suddenly* on our world; more especially, as the awful signs of the times so loudly warn us, that *now indeed* we "know

neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man may come." While unfolding and enforcing this glorious but too much neglected theme, in *such* a *spirit*, and for *such* a *purpose*, you cannot give it too marked a prominence in your preaching; for no theme, when thus scripturally unfolded and enforced, has a more direct tendency, or a more powerful influence, in promoting the believer's sanctification. You cannot, therefore, I admit, expatiate too fervently or frequently on that sweetest of all themes, which can engage the thoughts or tongues of redeemed sinners, whether on earth or in heaven, the ever-precious theme of their Redeemer's love. You cannot be too earnest in your appeals to your people, to surrender up themselves, unreservedly, soul and body, to the service of Him, who, for their sakes, surrendered up Himself, His soul and body, to the agonizing tortures of the death of the cross. You cannot too constantly proclaim the glad tidings of great joy, even that the chief of sinners are as fully invited, and will be as cordially welcomed, by the compassionate Saviour, as the most amiable of moral men. You cannot wage too uncompromising a war against self-righteousness, in every shape which it can assume; or exhibit,

too prominently the Redeemer's infinitely and alone meritorious righteousness, as the *exclusive* ground of His people's justification, and their *exclusive* title to their inheritance in heaven. Nor can you set forth, too fully, the unspeakable preciousness of the believer's privileges, and the exceeding great riches of grace and glory, provided for him, in that everlasting covenant, which is indeed "well ordered in all things, and sure." Neither can you pourtray, in too lively colouring, so far as Scripture has lifted up the veil, and revealed the glory that is reserved for the children of God, the prospects of future blessedness, which are unfolded, in the oracles of divine truth, as the everlasting portion of those, who, in the presence of a Saviour-God, shall taste the fulness of joy, and at His right-hand pleasures for evermore.

But, beloved brother in the ministry of the Gospel, allow me affectionately to suggest, whether these supremely important themes should not be *practically*, as well as *prominently*, inculcated. Whether the details of Christian duty should not, as it is always in the apostolical epistles, so also in your preaching, be combined with the development of Christian doctrine. (You know how the apostles, after laying

the foundation of doctrinal truth in the opening of their epistles, uniformly build on that foundation, at the close, the superstructure of practical godliness, and a holy and devoted life.) Whether the enforcement of precepts should not be blended with the exhibition of privileges. Whether the various features of the Christian character should not be brought out, in fuller manifestation; and the particular modes of employing their time and talents, according to their various stations and opportunities, by which the people, over whom you are appointed to watch, may most abundantly advance the glory of the Saviour, should not be more distinctly explained to them; so that the zeal, in that Saviour's service, which your heart-stirring appeals on His behalf may have kindled, may not waste itself in unprofitable excitement, or as unprofitable talk; or, from want of proper direction, urge its enthusiastic votary into some eccentric course; but may be embodied, and exhibited, in a consistent career of Christian devotedness, modelled after the Saviour's character, and animated by His own Spirit of humility, holiness, and love!

How invaluable on this subject is the advice of one, whose writings breathe the very spirit of

the apostolic age, Archbishop Leighton—"The right spiritual knowledge that a Christian hath of God, and of himself, differenceth itself from whatsoever is likest to it, by the power and influence it hath upon the heart and life. And in this, it hath the lively impression of that doctrine of the Holy Scriptures that teaches it; wherein we shall find throughout, that the high mysteries of religion are accompanied with practical truths, which not only agree with them, but are drawn out of them, and not violently drawn, but naturally flowing from them, as pure streams from a pure spring. Thus in this Epistle, (1 St. Peter,) we find the apostle intermixing his divine doctrine with most useful and practical exhortations.

"And upon this model ought both the ministers of the Gospel to form their preaching, and the hearers their ear. Ministers are not to instruct only, or to exhort only, but to do both. To exhort men to holiness and the duties of a Christian life, without instructing them in the doctrine of faith, and bringing them to Jesus Christ, is to build a house without a foundation. And, on the other side, to instruct the mind in the knowledge of divine things, and neglect

the pressing of that practice and power of godliness, which is the undivided companion of true faith, is to forget the building that ought to be raised upon that foundation once laid, which is likewise a point of very great folly. Or, if men, after laying that right foundation, do proceed to the superstructure of vain and empty speculations, it is but to 'build hay and stubble,' instead of those solid truths, that direct the soul in the way of happiness, which are of more solidity and worth than 'gold, and silver, and precious stones.' Christ, and the doctrine that reveals Him, is called by St. Paul 'the mystery of faith,' (1 Tim. iii. 9.) and verse 16, 'the mystery of godliness;' as Christ is the object of faith, so is He the spring and fountain of godliness. The apostle having, we see, in his foregoing discourse, unfolded the excellency of Christ in him, proceeds here to exhort them to that pure and spiritual temper of mind, and course of life, that becomes them as Christians.

"All they who do really come to Jesus Christ, as they come to Him, as their Saviour, to be clothed with Him, and made righteous by Him, so they come likewise to Him, as their Sanctifier, to be made new and holy by Him, to die and

live with Him, to follow the Lamb wheresoever He goes, through the hardest sufferings, and death itself. And this spiritual suffering and dying with Him, is the universal way of all His followers: they are all martyrs thus in the crucifying of sinful flesh, and so dying for Him, and with Him.

"Sanctification is necessary as inseparably connected with justification; not only as its companion, but as its end, which in some sort raises it above the other. We see that it was the thing which God eyed and intended, in taking away the guiltiness of sin, that we might be renewed and sanctified. 'For this end was that great work undertaken by the Son of God, that He might frame out of polluted mankind a new and holy generation to His Father, who might compass His throne in the life of glory, and give Him pure praises, and behold His face in that eternity. Now, for this end it was needful, according to the all-wise purpose of the Father, that the guiltiness of sin and sentence of death should be once removed; and thus, the burthen of that lay upon Christ's shoulders on the cross.' That done, it is further necessary, that souls so delivered be likewise purified and renewed, for they are de-

signed for perfection of holiness in the end, and it must begin here."

Do not then rest satisfied with vindicating the glorious doctrine of the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer from unmerited censure, (as if it tended to encourage ungodliness,) by reminding your flock, that the most unmixed dependence on the Redeemer's righteousness has no natural affinity with even a careless, much less an ungodly life—but shew them, [1]how directly and powerfully it is calculated to promote personal holiness, and devotedness to the Saviour's service, because, by deepening the sense of obligation to His self-sacrificing love, (since it teaches the believer to regard *all* his glorious privileges and prospects, as purchased

[1] See this subject, illustrated and impressed, with peculiar felicity and force, in the heavenly-minded Leighton's incomparable Commentary on 1st Epistle of St. Peter; in Doctor O'Brien's truly admirable Sermons on Justification, whose intrinsic value did not require to be so painfully enhanced, as it now is, by the lamentable scarcity of a work, which ought to be in every theological student's hands; in that masterpiece of Christian philosophy, Chalmers' Lectures on the Romans; and also in "Letters on Sanctification, by the Rev. John Brown, of Whitburn," in which the distinct nature, though inseparable union, of justification and sanctification, is clearly unfolded, and the manner in which the former tends to the promotion of the latter, accurately explained, and energetically enforced.

entirely by that Saviour's blood,) it gives increased power to *that principle*, which is the spring of all acceptable obedience, the *constraining love of Christ!* Shew them that he, who most undividedly trusts in the Saviour's righteousness, for all the blessings of grace and glory, of time and eternity, will love that Saviour *most gratefully*; and that the hatred of sin, the love of holiness, the desire to glorify Him, who died for us, and faithfully to follow His steps, will always keep pace with the progress of genuine gratitude and love to Him! And that, therefore, whatever promotes our love to Christ, equally promotes our devotedness and conformity to Christ. Thus prove to your people, that the doctrine of "imputed righteousness," by deepening the believer's gratitude to God, our Saviour, secures most effectually the interests of Christian morality, and provides most abundantly for the faithful discharge of every Christian duty.

Do not either rest satisfied with telling your people, that, while trusting undividedly in the Redeemer's righteousness, they must be holy; but explain to them, with clearness and accuracy, the nature of Christian holiness; its essential features, and characteristics; how it

should be cultivated in the heart, and exhibited in the life; what will tend to retard, and what to promote its growth. Go into the details of the means, which the sincere disciple of Jesus should adopt, in his pursuit of holiness, so as to secure his success. And while you continually remind him, that for every step of progress he can hope to make, he must be altogether indebted to the grace and power of God, the Holy Ghost, (and you should, therefore, give a *decided prominence*, in your preaching, to the work and offices of the Blessed Spirit,) and must lean entirely on the divine strength, and seek perseveringly the sanctifying influences, of this Omnipotent Spirit, whose exclusive prerogative it is to make the children of God holy, and thus meet for heaven, remind him as faithfully that, in humble dependence on this Almighty Guide and Guardian, the Author, and Giver, and Sustainer of all spiritual life, he must be unwearied in the use of all those appointed means of grace, which are the ordinary channels, through which the Spirit conveys His renewing influences into the soul; and in the faithful use of which alone can the believer look, with humble confidence, for the impartation of those supplies of divine grace, of which he

stands so much in need, as they are so altogether indispensable for the sanctification of his soul.

Again, do not be content with telling your people, that they must endeavour, in all things, to glorify a Saviour-God, but explain to them, with detailed particularity of statement, how, according to their various stations, relationships, and opportunities, they can most effectually advance His cause, who, by His own blood, has purchased the dearest right to *all* their talents, and to *all* their time. Lead them to consider carefully, what measure of influence they may possess, whether from their situation in society, or their natural endowments, or acquired attainments, or through any other channel; and how they can best turn it to account, for the promotion of *His* glory, who, to exalt them to everlasting glory, stooped even to the humiliation of the manger, and the death of the cross. Point out to them, distinctly and in detail, how their time should be employed; how their money should be expended; how their authority should be exercised, with a view to this object, which should ever be the first and dearest to their hearts. Impress on them, solemnly and faithfully, what an awful responsibility rests

on them, if heads of families, to regulate, so as to advance the glory of God, their domestic establishment, in every particular, as to personal expenditure, and social intercourse, the books read, the recreations permitted, the conversation carried on, and the objects plainly perceived, by the tenor of the whole system of arrangement, to be recognized in the family circle, as of paramount importance in themselves, and entitled to the supreme solicitude and estimation of all around.

Point out to them, particularly, the utter unsuitableness to the character, and injurious influence to the spirituality, of a child of God, in those essentially *ungodly* amusements, which the votaries of the world so eagerly pursue, such as the theatre, the ball-room, and all the assemblies of fashionable folly. Amusements, whose professed object is to foster forgetfulness of God, as the essential qualification for the enjoyment of happiness, in those who derive from His bounty every blessing they possess. Amusements, which are so avowedly unchristian in their constitution, that an allusion to the love and sufferings of Christ, amidst scenes of such unsanctified gaiety, would be felt to be altogether out of place—indeed a very

profanation of the sacred theme. Amusements, which so far from answering the purpose, which all, who love that Saviour, can alone consistently seek in their recreations, even being refreshed by them for entering, with renewed vigour, on the service of the Lord they love, have an exactly opposite result, and entirely unfit the spirit for holding communion, in devout retirement, with the Father of spirits, or engaging, with cordial energy, in His blessed cause. And therefore amusements, whose unhallowed scenes assuredly would not be the place, out of which a child of God would wish to be suddenly summoned by death, into the presence of Him, who poured out His blood for his salvation; or in which he would wish to be found by that Saviour, at His coming, were He unexpectedly to appear, revealed from heaven, in flaming fire. Oh! then point out to your people, how awfully inconsistent it is in one, that professes to love Him who died for us, to go for enjoyment into a scene, where he would shudder to be found by the sudden summons of the stroke of death, or the sudden appearing of the Son of God.

Remind them, also, how that grateful desire to glorify God, which ought to animate their

every movement, should constrain them to endeavour to persuade *every individual*, over whom they have any influence, (*beginning with the members of their own family circle*, and extending to every friend, and even every acquaintance, who is unacquainted with the preciousness of Jesus,) to esteem Him, as He is, in truth, the Pearl of great price, and to devote themselves, with an unreserved surrender, to Him, and to His service, for time and for eternity. How peculiarly they should feel responsible for the spiritual welfare of the servants, whom the providence of God has committed to their charge, and should labour, by every means in their power, to promote it to the uttermost. And how they should be tenderly solicitous to assist all whom they love in Christ, in running, with increasing ardour, their heavenward race—stimulating them to press, with untiring energy, after higher degrees of holiness, and a more entire consecration of every talent to the advancement of His glory. Remind them, also, how this same divine principle —this constraining love of Christ—should animate them to be diligent and liberal, (and self-denying, in order to enlarge their liberality,) in promoting all the plans, already in operation,

and ingenious in devising others, for spreading the knowledge of His saving name, at home, among His ancient people, and the benighted idolaters in heathen lands—for mitigating the frightful mass of human misery—arresting the torrent of sin and suffering upon earth—and diffusing all the precious blessings, temporal and eternal, which the Gospel, when cordially embraced, always brings in its train, to the utmost extent that their influence can reach, in their neighbourhood—their native land—and throughout the world. Yes! be *zealous* in your advocacy of the missionary cause with your people! Press on them frequently the consideration, that this cause should be pre-eminently dear to all who sincerely love the Lord Jesus Christ, and are like-minded with Him, in compassionating the wretchedness, and desiring the salvation of immortal souls! Be assured you may hope for a richer blessing on all your pastoral ministrations, if you are faithful and fervent in pleading the cause of missions, which is the Saviour's cause, with the flock committed to your charge!

Again, in regard to the character of Christ, do not be content with telling your people, in the general, that conformity to this divine

character is indispensably necessary, as an evidence of the vitality of their faith in His blood, and the validity of their claim to an interest in His righteousness, as well as a qualification for the enjoyment of that heavenly inheritance, which He has purchased for them, by His obedience unto death—even the death of the cross! This general statement, however true, is by no means sufficient, for the accomplishment of what is, after all, the great ultimate design of the Gospel scheme; and what should, therefore, be equally the ultimate design of all Gospel ministrations—namely, the renewal in the divine image, (or in other words, in conformity to Christ,) in righteousness and true holiness, through the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, the objects of the eternal Father's electing love—that they may thus be made meet for that inheritance among the saints in light—that purchased possession, to which, as joint-heirs with Christ, in right of His meritorious sufferings and righteousness, they are entitled, but which, without conformity to His character, were they even invested with it, they could not possibly enjoy.

Something, much more distinct and detailed than this general announcement of the necessity

of like-mindedness with Christ, is required, in your preaching, in order to assist the children of God in your congregation, in attaining to that resemblance to the Redeemer, in every lovely feature of His celestial character, in which the very essence of their meetness for heaven consists. Every separate feature of that divine character should be developed, as illustrated by those deeply-interesting incidents, in the narrative of His history, which are recorded with such exquisite simplicity in the Scriptures, and so touchingly display the loveliness of a character, of whose matchless perfection it is enough to state, that it is the character of the blessed God, embodied in a human form, and that in assimilation to *its* excellence consists that renewal in the divine image, by which alone man can be made meet for the inhabitation and enjoyment of the holy heaven of a holy God! The advantage of thus exhibiting the features of the Saviour's character, as illustrated by the incidents of His history, may be exemplified by one or two instances.

Would you exhort the faithful followers of the Lamb, over whom you are appointed to watch, to copy the example of His meekness and forgivingness? How different is a general exhor-

tation to this effect, from leading your people to the foot of the Redeemer's cross, and desiring them to listen to Him, while hanging there, amidst excruciating agony of soul and body, breathing out His departing spirit in that most merciful prayer, for His infuriate murderers—" Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Would you inculcate on them the duty of unmurmuring resignation to their heavenly Father's will, amidst the most afflictive trials, with which, in His chastening love He may see fit to visit them? Oh! it is one thing, when exhorting to this duty, in a general way to remind them, that they should copy the pattern of the Redeemer's resignation; and it is quite another thing, and immeasurably more calculated to attract every affection of the heart, and awaken every energy of the soul, to the most strenuous efforts at imitation of the Saviour's submission, in reliance on the promised power of the Holy Spirit, to call on your flock to follow you to the garden of Gethsemane, and there to gaze on their adorable Redeemer, in the hour of His agony; and to hear Him, while prostrate on the ground, in that mysterious bloody sweat, which so awfully revealed the secret anguish of His soul, pouring

out that most affecting prayer, in which the deepest grief, and the sublimest resignation, are so beautifully blended—"Oh, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done!"—And then remind them, that the reason, why it was not possible for that cup to pass away from Him, and why He was content, with such cheerful resignation, to drain it to the dregs, was, that His love for them constrained Him, as their Surety, and the sacrifice for their sins, to drink its every drop of bitterness, as otherwise the offended justice of a holy God must have condemned them to drink of the cup of His righteous wrath, for ever and ever. And oh! surely, you supply the children of God with a motive for resignation to *any* trial, which He, who drained *that cup* for their sakes, may appoint, immeasurably more powerful and attractive in its influence, and more calculated to fill their hearts with *happy comfort*, than general exhortations to the discharge of this duty, or a general reference to the character of Christ!

Would you impress on them the beauty and the benefit of that meek answer to unjust accusation, or bitter reproach, which often turns

away wrath, and quenches the kindled spark of resentful feeling? Deem it not enough to remind them, that when their Divine Master was reviled, He reviled not again—but bid them look at Him,—standing, in meek majestic silence, before the judgment-seat of Pilate—exhibiting a sublime composure, which no injustice, no indignities, could for a moment ruffle; and when, in outrageous defiance of every principle of equity, the innocent Sufferer was barbarously smitten on the cheek—tell those, who would prove that they have indeed the Spirit of Christ, to listen to His meek expostulation—"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil—but if well, why smitest thou Me?" And oh! if all, who love the Saviour, would *thus* reply to railing accusations, or cutting taunts, how often would they still the storm of domestic strife, and prevent the spark of anger, which some sudden collision may have kindled, from bursting into a fiercely burning flame!

Would you persuade them to be clothed with humility, that garment so befitting a sinner, saved by sovereign grace—so beautiful, even in the eyes of the blessed God Himself? Do not confine yourself to reminding them, that their Divine Master expressly requires of them "to

learn of Him, for He was meek and lowly of heart"—thus selecting His own lowliness of heart, out of all the graces which adorned His character, as the object of distinguished and peculiar commendation, and which He especially delights to see reflected in the character of His true disciples. Or how earnestly He reiterated the declaration, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Or even what a stupendous display of condescending humility is exhibited in the incarnation of Him, "who, though He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death—even the death of the cross." To enforce humility, if possible, more powerfully and attractively by the adorable Redeemer's example, exhibit Him, who created all things in heaven and earth—Him, who maketh the clouds His chariot, and covereth Himself with light, as with a garment, exhibit *Him*—the Almighty Creator of the universe—when He tabernacled in the flesh, rising from the table,

where He had been sitting at supper, with His disciples, that night to be much remembered throughout the ages of eternity, and laying aside His garments, and taking a towel, and girding Himself, then pouring water into a basin, and washing the disciples' feet, and wiping them with the towel, wherewith He was girded. Oh! lead those, who love the Saviour, to look on this wondrous sight—to behold their Divine Redeemer stooping to an act of such infinite condescension. Remind them of His own impressive address to His disciples—"Know ye what I have done? Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet!" And surely, then, you can make an irresistible appeal to all His faithful followers, while gazing, with the eye of faith, on their Divine and beloved Lord and Master, appearing in *such a garb, and such an attitude*, whether they can cherish in their hearts a single spark of pride—whether they should not indeed desire to be clothed with humility—and whether there can be any attitude, too lowly for them to assume, any labour of love, too humiliating for them to perform, if they can thereby exhibit a

closer conformity to their Divine Master's example; and promote at once His glory, and the temporal or spiritual comfort of any even the very humblest of His poor, weak, suffering saints.

Or would you recommend to those, who have embraced the "truth as it is in Jesus," that endearing tenderness of sympathy with the sorrows of others, which sheds such a halo of softened glory round a character, in which all the loftier qualities that command our veneration are combined, do not content yourself with reminding them, that such sympathy preeminently distinguished that divine Philanthropist—that great High Priest, who can indeed be touched with a feeling of His people's infirmities—whose bosom yearned with such pitying compassion over the miseries of mortality, that He left the throne of His glory to come down to earth to mitigate them, and to pour the balm of His divine consolations into the mourners' hearts—and who in the overflowings of a sympathy, that passeth all understanding, addresses to all the children of affliction that most endearing invitation—"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" Do not feel satisfied with this general declaration, but lead those who love Jesus, and

desire to be like Him, to contemplate Him, on some of those interesting occasions, when this sympathy shines forth with a divine splendour, in His words, or works of mercy, or the yet more expressive language of His tears. Bring them, step by step, through every circumstance of that most touching narrative, recorded in the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of St. John. Bid them mark the Saviour's conduct towards the family of Bethany,[1] if they would understand what deep, delicate, and at the same time, practical sympathy with the sorrows of others means; and how it should display itself in its desire to act the part of the good Samaritan, and pour the wine and oil of heavenly consolation into the festering wounds of a bleeding heart! Exhibit before them the character of the Saviour, as developed in that chapter, from the moment He received the affecting message—"Lord! he whom thou lovest is sick," till, standing beside the grave of that beloved friend, "Jesus wept!" (Oh! that one chapter is worth volumes of human composition, on the subject of true Christian sympathy!) Or point

[1] See this beautifully developed in a work, lately translated from the French, by the Rev. W. Hare, entitled—"The Family of Bethany."

Him out, arresting the progress of the funeral procession, which He met at the gate of Nain, and in the eagerness of His compassionate solicitude to soothe the sorrows of the widowed mother's heart, before He puts forth the word of power, which is to call back her only son from the grave, crying out to her, with that tenderness of manner which was so peculiarly His own, "Weep not!" Or remind them how, when the hour of His agony and death drew nigh, as He was on His journey to Jerusalem, to be there insulted, condemned, crucified—when He came near the city, and beheld it, forgetful, as it were, of all the sufferings that awaited Himself there, and only thinking of the fearful woes, the utter desolation, that was impending over His beloved but devoted Jerusalem, He wept over it, saying, "Oh, Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered your children, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" Or bid them study the xiv. xv. xvi. and xvii. of St. John! Or bring to their recollection how, when He was on His way to Calvary, and when one might have supposed that His whole soul would have been absorbed in the prospect of the appalling sufferings,

which were so soon to burst, in all their overwhelming force, on His self-devoted head, wringing from Him that fearful cry of altogether inconceivable agony, "Eloi! Eloi! lama sabacthani!" (and all this was perfectly foreknown by Him)—oh! remind those who would learn, from the example of Jesus, to weep with them that weep, how in that hour he turned to the train of mourners, who followed Him, and exclaimed, (as if their coming sorrows altogether obliterated from His mind the remembrance of His own)—"Daughters of Jerusalem! weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children!" Surely you will *thus* give your people a more correct conception of the nature, and a more endearing view of the loveliness, of Christian sympathy, as well as supply them with more persuasive motives for endeavouring to cultivate this (I had almost said) most attractive feature of the Christian character, than if you were to spread before them volumes of metaphysical disquisition on its properties and influences, and were to seek to win them to its cultivation, by the charms of the most enchanting eloquence, that ever flowed from the lips of man!

It is unnecessary to pursue the subject fur-

ther, (though there be not a sweeter, or more profitable one, in the range of Christian ethics,) or to show, how every feature of the Saviour's character may be similarly illustrated by the incidents of His life. Whether it be that deep devotional spirit, which was exhibited in His constant communion with His Father in Heaven —or that fervent zeal for the glory of God, which glowed, as an inextinguishable fire, in His breast—or that benevolent delight in contributing to the happiness of man, which prompted Him continually "to go about doing good," —or that unsullied purity, which, like a bright halo of celestial glory, always encircled Him— or that profound humility, (for we would again advert to this feature,) which was flung, like a veil of celestial workmanship, over all the manifestations of His majesty—all the outgoings of His love—and shed a softened splendour round them all! There is not one of these, or of any of the other features, that bear so legibly stamped on them the impress of divinity, which cannot be most beautifully developed by the recorded narrative of His life. And I cannot but feel, that a more powerful means could not be employed, to counteract the poisonous influence of Antinomian heresy, and to promote

the progress of vital godliness, and thus advance the glorious object, for which the Son of God was manifested in the flesh, than thus, (while continually holding up His divine righteousness, as the sinner's only ground of trust,) to exhibit, in distinct and detailed display, as illustrated by the history of His sojourn upon earth, the various features of the character of Him, who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of His person;" and to press it earnestly and frequently on the consideration of all, who profess to trust in His righteousness, that, if they would indeed glorify Him upon earth, or be made meet for partaking of His glory in heaven, they must be conformed to His image, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in every feature, in which the incarnate God can be a model for the imitation of regenerated man.

From this exhibition of the Saviour's character, as the pattern, which in all things His people are to follow, two most important advantages may be expected to result. One, that those, who are conscious that they are not even endeavouring to attain to any measure of conformity to this character, may be awakened to a sense of their awfully perilous condition, as

being altogether destitute of any scriptural claim to the privileges and hopes of the children of God. For it is unequivocally declared, that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His,"—that "whom the Father hath predestinated, He hath predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son," and that "He has left His people an example, that they should follow His steps." If then the various features of His divine character were more frequently and fully set forth, illustrated in the manner we have described, might not those nominal professors of His gospel, in our congregations, who bear His name, without even a desire to bear His image, be awakened to a conviction of their unquestionable want of any resemblance to the character of Him, whose disciples they profess to be? And might not this conviction, brought home to their hearts, by the almighty power of the Holy Ghost, arouse them to a sense of their danger, as having only a name to live by, but being dead, in the sight of God—without one spark of spiritual life! without one mark of a scriptural hope of salvation!

I cannot but hope, that, were the character of Jesus thus fully developed before the crowded

congregations, that attend the evangelical preaching of our day, the Holy Spirit would fix, in many a self-deceiving heart, the arrow of conviction of sin, and the consequent need of a Saviour's blood to atone for its guilt, and a Saviour's grace to cleanse from its defilements, and to renew the purified soul in the divine image, thus presented in most attractive loveliness, as embodied in the character of the Son of God! Many, who are now deceiving themselves with a delusive hope of heaven, whether based on a professed reliance on His righteousness, or on any other foundation, would be startled out of their fatal dream by the conviction, that being devoid of a conformity to this divine character, they wanted not merely the most decisive evidence of a saving interest in the Redeemer's righteousness, but also the essential requisite for the enjoyment of heaven itself, as it is too manifest, to require laboured demonstration in its proof, that the presence of Jehovah-Jesus, a Saviour-God, in which, to those who love and are *like Him*, the very essence of heaven's happiness consists, could impart no pleasure, but must be a source of unmixed pain, to those, who are destitute of congeniality with the character of heaven's holy God!

Another important advantage, that would follow from this fuller and more frequent exhibition of the Saviour's character, is, that those, who really love Him, would be thus enabled, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, more rapidly to attain to that conformity to His divine character, which is, as we have seen, the ultimate object of the Father's electing love—the Son's mediatorial work—and the Spirit's sanctifying grace. By having the loveliness of this character more frequently exhibited before them, they would better understand the nature of true holiness, when viewed as consisting in conformity to Christ; and their admiration of its celestial beauty, and their consequent desire to resemble what they admire would be deepened, and would naturally produce increased exertions to accomplish an object, with which their own happiness, and the glory of their God, are so inseparably linked. It would, in truth, be altogether impossible for a child of God to be habitually in contact and communion with the Saviour, in the affectionate and devout contemplation of His adorable character, without gradually catching more and more of resemblance to every feature of His divine countenance, (if one may

so speak,) and closer congeniality with His mind and Spirit. And when holiness is thus seen to be identified with having the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, and walking in His steps, it wears both a more palpable form, and a more endearing aspect, and makes its appeal more irresistibly both to the understanding and the heart!

We all know the assimilating influence of frequent communion with a beloved friend, whose character we contemplate with a high degree of affection and esteem. Oh! then, what blessed results might be anticipated from the influence of frequent communion with this Divine Friend, having all the attractive features of His character constantly before our view! What an assimilating process might be expected to be carried on, by the omnipotent energy of God the Holy Ghost! And what can be desired for the advancement of God's glory, or the believer's happiness, more than this assimilation, since it involves likeness to the blessed God, in that very point, in which His own felicity essentially consists, and by an assimilation to which the highest degree of happiness, within the reach of any created being, is attained. For assuredly God's character—what, by way of

distinction, we are accustomed to call His moral perfections, constitute, primarily and essentially, His glory, and His happiness—since it is manifest, that, were we to imagine a Being, possessed of all the natural perfections, if we may so call them, which we ascribe to the living God, invested with omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, but devoid of infinite justice, benevolence, and holiness; such a Being could neither in Himself be perfectly happy, nor entitled to our supreme veneration, confidence, and love! If, then, God's moral character be essentially His glory and felicity, and if the character of Jesus of Nazareth be the character of God, with all the divine perfections wrought into the texture of a human form, and thus at once adapted to our comprehension, and endeared to our affections, by all the attractive sympathies of a human heart, and a human voice, oh! surely, the sum and substance of a believer's blessedness must consist in such a congeniality with this character, in thought, desire, and affection, as will, in the emphatic language of Scripture, make him one with Christ, one, in perfect union or identity of will and purpose, of sentiment and disposition, of taste and temper! And if this be so, ought

not this character to be more fully exhibited by the preacher, in his public ministrations, and more habitually studied by the believer, in his private meditations, that by keeping its divine beauty, in every lovely feature, more constantly in view, a more ardent desire for entire conformity to it may be kindled by that devout adoration, which this full display of its celestial charms would necessarily excite in those who love the Lord!

I cannot but feel convinced, that were this plan adopted, and, at the same time, the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, by which alone the work of assimilation can be carried on, earnestly implored, we should be less frequently offended and pained by the exhibition of glaring inconsistencies, in the temper and character of professing Christians, of whom, in the judgment of charity, we are disposed in the main to cherish a favourable opinion, as of those who have indeed surrendered up themselves to the service of the Lord.

We should not so frequently witness the anomalous spectacle, which now so often perplexes and distresses us, in the professing Church of Christ, of characters, whose sincerity we would be reluctant to doubt; displaying, in their ge-

neral demeanour, a spirit so strangely unlike His, in whose steps they are professing to tread, and whose glory they are desirous to promote—Bitter in their zeal for Him, who was the incarnation of Divine love—proud in their deportment, while calling themselves the followers of Him, who was meek, and lowly of heart —rough and rude in advocating the cause of the mild, the gentle Lamb of God—contentious and overbearing in their efforts to extend the empire of the Prince of Peace! Uncharitable in judgment, and censorious in remark, while claiming the closest relationship to Him, who invented for the shameful slumber of His disciples, in the garden of Gethsemane, that most merciful excuse, —"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak!"—Coveting the honours, and courting the favour of that world, on whose glory he poured such contempt, and whose friendship He has declared to be enmity against God. Yea! and even impatient and repining, under trials—peevish and resentful, under provocations, while, in right of their profession, they put themselves forward, as reflecting, to the eyes of the world, the image of the patient and uncomplaining, the merciful and forgiving Redeemer of mankind.

CHAPTER VI.

RELIGIOUS DECLENSION.

ANOTHER cause, which, I cannot but think, has greatly tended to lower the standard, and retard the progress, of vital godliness, in our day, is a most erroneous impression, which, I fear, is extensively prevalent, that, instead of the believer's course from the period of his conversion, being one of continual advancement—of constantly progressive sanctification ; it is quite to be expected that the fervour of his first love, and zeal in divine things will soon subside, and be necessarily followed by a season of comparative coldness and declension.

Too many, in our day, when the warm glow of hallowed affection, which, on their being first awakened to a sense of their own awful guilt and danger, and their infinite obligation to a Redeemer's love, burned in their breasts towards a Saviour-God, begins to fade away, instead of being alarmed by the first symptoms of declining strength, or sweetness, in what

Scripture so beautifully designates "their first love," contemplate the change without any serious apprehension; from a persuasion, that this is the natural course of events, in the history of the Christian's spiritual experience. That all the children of God, on their first entrance on their heavenward course, feel a liveliness of impression, a fervour of affection, a rapture of enjoyment, which sooner or later must abate. And that, however this declension may be regretted, it must be submitted to, as inevitable, or, perhaps, it is even imagined, acquiesced in with cheerful resignation, as an arrangement of God, in the economy of the kingdom of grace; instead of being mourned over, and struggled against, as an effect of the combined influence of their own corrupt nature, and of Satan's power, which the Holy Spirit, if His Almighty aid were devoutly implored, and His suggestions and admonitions faithfully followed, would enable them to overcome.

Now I know—indeed, I can conceive nothing, more powerfully calculated actually to paralyze every vigorous effort after high attainments in holiness, in spirituality of affections, and devotedness of heart and life, than such a per-

suasion as this! It cuts the sinews of all spiritual activity—withers in the bud the fairest promises of opening grace—and blights, with its chilling breath, those aspirations after heavenly-mindedness, which at first soared up, as on wings of flame, to the throne of God, and of the Lamb. Let but a man once be convinced, that, instead of looking for a perpetual progress in the divine life, and that, every day, his love to the God of his salvation is to become deeper in its intensity, and more constraining in its influence—and his zeal for His glory more affectionately fervent, and more practically operative—and his conformity to His character more fully developed, both in the inner and the outer man; let him but once cherish the conviction, that a process, the very opposite, must be expected to take place; and you may predict, with infallible certainty, that a rapid declension will be speedily exhibited in every manifestation and movement of his spiritual life. The torpedo-touch of this chilling conviction will at once benumb every spiritual energy. Looking on the declension, of which perhaps he is painfully conscious, more as a calamity, to be deplored, and acquiesced in, than as a sin, to be struggled against, and

overcome, he will not even make an effort to recover the ground he has lost, much less to gain further progress in his heavenward race. Wrapping himself up in the mischievous delusion, that this is the regular course of affairs in the divine administration, he will sink, without a struggle, into a state of spiritual stupefaction, satisfied that he is safe, as to his everlasting destiny, because he has fled for refuge from the wrath to come to the outstretched arms of a Saviour's love, and is resting his hopes of acceptance exclusively on that Saviour's righteousness.

Now, what invests this erroneous impression with such a peculiarly dangerous character is, that there is a certain admixture of truth, blended with it, just sufficient to throw round it an imposing speciousness, calculated to blind its deluded victim to its true nature and consequences. It must be admitted, that there *is* a peculiar fervour and sweetness in the first love of a young convert, when first he escapes from the horrors of an awakened conscience, and experiences the unutterable blessedness of being at peace with God. When first he is awakened to a sense of the vastness of his debt to a Redeemer's love, and feels that all

his hopes of eternal happiness and glory rest on that Redeemer's sufferings, and humiliation, and death, even the death of the cross. When first he thus enters on a new world, where every object appears invested with celestial beauty and splendour by the smile of a Saviour's countenance, he does confessedly experience a fervour of gratitude, an intensity of enjoyment, arising from the *novelty* of the scenes that have been just unfolded to his view, and the sensations that have been for the first time kindled in his breast, to which, in *one sense*, nothing perhaps in his subsequent career can be compared. There is something in the freshness of morning's early dawn, when the first rays of the rising sun begin to scatter the darkness of night, and to pour gladness and glory all around—when the dew is sparkling in its unsullied beauty, on every herb and flower, and the voice of "earliest birds" salutes, with their matin-hymns of praise, the appearance of the glorious orb of light—yes, there is something in the sweetness of that hour, surpassing in some respects the enjoyment, which the fullest splendour of the noon-tide sun can yield. Now there is something analogous to this in the morning of man's

spiritual life—the early dawn of his spiritual experience! When the Sun of righteousness first rises on his soul, with healing on His wings, scattering the gloom of spiritual darkness, that had so long overshadowed him, and pouring all around him an atmosphere of gladness and of glory; and the dews of divine grace—the refreshing influences of the Holy Spirit, first descend on him from heaven, in all their freshness, brightening and softening every newly planted spiritual hope, and joy, and fruit of righteousness; and the first songs of grateful praise—sweeter than "the charm of earliest birds," ascend, in that bright morning of the believer's spiritual life, before the throne of God, and of the Lamb—Oh! yes, there is confessedly a sweetness in all this, so peculiar from its novelty, so exquisite from its freshness, that often will the most consistent and advanced Christian look back on it, with a feeling of fond regret—of melancholy pleasure—while contrasting it with many a lamented subsequent season of comparative coldness, and constrained to exclaim, with such sorrow as only those, who have experienced it, can understand—

"Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord!"

But while all this is fully conceded, as borne out by the experience of many of the most devoted and holy servants of the Lord, does it therefore follow, that the freshness, the sweetness of the earliest dawn of the believer's spiritual life is to be uniformly succeeded by a chilling withering blight, passing over all his spiritual affections and energies, all his divinely implanted hopes of joys? Might not the analogy of the image, to which we have referred, teach us a different, and a far more profitable lesson? True—the freshness of the morning-hour *does* pass away, and, with it, that peculiar charm, which contrast with preceding darkness, and the first glow of re-animation, kindled by the rays of the rising sun in a newly wakened world, so richly supply! But what succeeds this hour of loveliness in the kingdom of nature? Is it not a season of sunshine, of still brighter splendour, and a still warmer glow? Does not the light of the morning shine more and more unto the perfect day? And, as it advances, is it not, in every step of its progress, marked by the communication of fresh blessings, beautifying by its radiance every object, on which it pours its brightening beams—gladdening every heart, that is opened to

receive its exhilarating influences—and ripening all those fruits, which depend on it for vitality and growth? And should it not be even thus in the kingdom of grace? Would it not be agreeable to the analogy, which, in so many instances subsists between this and the kingdom of nature, to expect, that the dawn of divine grace in the soul would gradually brighten into the day of glory, even the perfect day of matured Christian love, and joy, and holiness—That the Sun of righteousness would be found to pour a progressively brighter radiance of celestial light round the believer's path, and warmer glow of holy love into his heart, while advancing towards its meridian splendour —and that every flower of heavenly origin, planted in his soul, would expand into its fullest bloom of beauty, and every fruit of the Spirit be ripened into its most mellowed richness of flavour, in proportion as they enjoyed more abundantly, in the course of His beneficent career, the divine influences of that glorious Sun.

And is not this an expectation, warranted alike by the conclusions of reason, and the testimony of the word of God? Is it not reasonable to anticipate, that a longer ac-

quaintance with a Saviour-God would produce sentiments of deepened veneration, gratitude, confidingness, and love towards Him? That further experience, in the progress of the Christian pilgrimage, of the unchangeable faithfulness, and unwearying tenderness of this divine Friend, would draw the heart closer to Him, in the hallowed bonds of that union, which death, so far from dissolving, will only stamp with the seal of heaven—the impress of immortality? And that every fresh communication of His grace, every new proof of His affectionate sympathy, and watchful care, (and not a day passes over the child of God, unmarked by some new proof of these!) would only endear "the Friend, who sticketh closer than a brother," still more to the believer's heart, and thus increase the fervour of his zeal for that beloved Saviour's glory, and his solicitude to promote it by the unreserved consecration of all his talents, and of all his time! Surely it is not reasonable to calculate on abated affection, on diminished zeal, on declining delight in communion of heart, and devotedness of life, as the natural results of longer acquaintance with Him, whose love to sinners is as unbounded, as the glory of His

divine perfections—with Him, who is the fountain of all true felicity, in earth or heaven, and in whose presence angels and archangels find the fulness of joy for evermore.

Is it not, on the contrary, most reasonable to anticipate, that love to the Saviour will continually advance in the heart, where once it has been shed abroad by the Holy Ghost; and that, in proportion as this love to the Saviour advances in any believer's heart, hatred of sin, even in its most subtle and secret form, and hungering after righteousness, as the very essence of conformity to His character, and meetness for the enjoyment of His society and His service, whether on earth, or in heaven, will proportionably advance? Does not increased intimacy with a beloved earthly friend, whose character is the object of our mingled affection and esteem, produce increasing assimilation to whatever is most attractive in that character? And why should not the more intimate and endeared communion, which, as progressive years of deepened experience of His love roll on, is enjoyed by His people with the divine Friend, who *so* loved them, and laid down His life for them, and in whom they behold every perfection of the divine character, em-

bodied in a human form, rendering Him indeed the chief among ten thousand—the altogether lovely—why should not *this* be expected to produce a similar result, so that those, who supremely love Him, might most reasonably be expected to become, every day, more and more like to Him they love? Can any thing offer a greater outrage to reason than to argue, that, while earthly friends are only more endeared to each other, the longer their friendship has subsisted, by the longer experience of each other's faithfulness, and tender sympathy in their mutual joys and sorrows, and while their progressive intimacy of intercourse produces progressive assimilation of character, a result, the very opposite of all this, is to be calculated upon in the friendship, that subsists between the adorable Redeemer, and His beloved blood-bought people?

Why should this be so? Is He, as a friend, to be less loved—less prized—less confided in, than the dearest earthly friend? Is He less faithful in His friendship—less tender in His sympathy? Has He given less convincing demonstrations of His love? Is there less in His character, to attract affectionate admiration, and awaken a desire for close congeniality?

Does it not seem absurdity, or something worse, even to ask such questions? Why, then, in the name of reason, and common sense, not to take higher ground at present—why should the opinion be so extensively—so fatally prevalent, that it is quite to be expected, as a matter of course, that the fervour of a young convert's first love to the Saviour is to be followed by results, the very opposite of what invariably take place in the experience of all true earthly affection?

Would not reason, indeed, if legitimately consulted, and allowed to give an unbiassed judgment, pronounce exactly an opposite decision? Would she not warrant the expectation, that just as much as the Lord Jesus Christ, both in the greatness and the manifestations of His love, and the divine beauty of His character, surpasses the most faithful, tender, and estimable earthly friend, even in that very proportion would years of longer acquaintance with Him, and increased experience of His loving-kindness, and closer communion with His Spirit, produce more abundantly every delightful result, that follows from the endearing intercourse of years between the fondest and most faithful of earthly friends.

And, on the other hand, what, (I would

again repeat the question, for I would impress it deeply on every believer's heart,) what can be a deeper affront to the Lord Jesus than to say, that it is quite reasonable to expect, that the longer you know Him, the less warmly will you love Him—the less pleasure will you feel in holding communion with Him—the less solicitude to promote His glory, and the less interest in whatever concerns Him, and His cause? I am well aware, that, when the sentiment is stated in *these terms*, the soul shrinks back in shuddering horror from giving it one moment's welcome in the heart, where once the love of Jesus has been shed abroad by the Holy Ghost. Yet analyze carefully the expectation, so generally, I fear, cherished, in the professing religious world, that declension and decay in love and zeal are to be regarded as the natural course of events, in the history of the believer's spiritual life, and does it not virtually amount to that very sentiment, which, when explicitly stated, and thus exhibited in its essential deformity, excites such unqualified abhorrence, as offering the most revolting insult to a Saviour-God.

And if, from the deductions of right reason, we turn to the testimony of revelation, on this

most important subject, we shall find a perfect harmony in their attestation to the truth of the sentiment, which we have been endeavouring to establish; for both alike warrant the opinion, that the believer's course, in his Christian career, should be one of continually progressive love, and zeal, and holiness, as well as increasing comfort, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Look at the various images, by which the Christian life is illustrated, in the Sacred Scriptures; and do they not all imply the idea of progress, of growth, of a going on to perfection? To one of the most beautiful of these images we have already adverted—the dawn of morning, gradually brightening into the full splendour of the noontide sun—"The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." What image could more appropriately illustrate the believer's continual advancement in divine light and love, and his perpetual progress in holiness and happiness? Does it not most beautifully represent his path as one, on which the smile of God's countenance is, every day, pouring a brighter flood of gladness, and of glory—while every Christian grace, every lovely feature of the Christian character, shines out each day, in clearer manifestation?

Look again at the image of the gradual ripening of the ear of corn—"first the blade; then the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear." Does not this convey the same idea of the gradual progress of the work of grace in the human heart? Does it not warrant us to expect, that the believer should each day be making some advance in the divine life? That the tender blade—the first opening spiritual apprehensions and affections of the young convert—should be continually ripening into "the full corn in the ear"—the matured experience, and fully developed character, of the confirmed Christian? What warrant is here for the opinion, that the progressive stages of the believer's career in the divine life are to be marked, not by increasing delight in communion with, and devotedness to God, his Saviour, but by declension and decay, both in his spiritual experiences and enjoyments?

Will not the same observation apply to the images of the grain of mustard-seed, gradually advancing from the least of all seed to a majestic and wide-spreading tree? And the small portion of leaven, "hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened?" Could any image, with more propriety or beauty than this last, illustrate the gradual process of the leaven

of divine grace, once it is hid in the heart by the Holy Ghost; working through the whole system of thought, feeling, temper and disposition, till the whole is leavened with such an admixture of divine principles and affections, as bears incontestable evidence that the Spirit of God has impregnated the entire mass with the quickening and sanctifying energies of His life-giving grace! Does not this similitude fully justify the hope, that when once, under the regenerating influence of the Spirit from on high, the leavening process, by which a soul is to be made meet for the service and society of a holy God, has commenced, it will go on progressively, bringing the whole man under the power of the divine principle implanted in his soul. That every day, the understanding will be more enlightened with the knowledge of "the truth, as it is in Jesus," in all its constraining and celestializing influences—and the heart be more filled with grateful love to Him who died for us—and the will be brought into more cordial subjection to the divine will—and the temper more attuned to harmony with the Saviour's, in all meekness, and gentleness, and love—and the character more closely conformed to His, in every lovely feature—and the life more entirely

devoted to His service, in the consecration of every talent by which His glory can be advanced. Can less than this progressive process come up to the full force of the image, employed by the Redeemer, to illustrate the influence of divine grace, carrying on its sanctifying operations in the soul, till the whole is leavened? And where is the least countenance afforded to the opinion, that the fermenting energy, which works so powerfully when first introduced into the soul, is soon to subside—to lose, as it were, its transforming efficacy—and leave the soul, if not with a diminished, at least without any increased measure of meetness for heaven, beyond what it possessed, when first the Holy Spirit hid the divine leaven in the heart?

Is there not the same absence of allusion to any anticipation of declension, the same exhibition of the prospect of increasing zeal, and devotedness, and sanctification, as legitimately to be looked for in the believer's onward course, when his spiritual career is illustrated by the images of a warfare to be waged—of a race to be run.

Are not unabated ardour, unslackened exertion, untiring perseverance, the essential characteristics of these striking images? Is it enough

for the warrior to enter on the field of battle, with a heart full of glowing courage, and a soul bent on high achievement? And may he then, when the conflict has commenced, allow his ardour to be cooled, his energy to sink into apathy, and the weapons of his warfare to hang listlessly at his side? Will the fervour of his spirit on entering the field, if thus followed by listlessness and inactivity, secure to him the conquest? And may the racer, provided he commences his career with vigour, soon remit his exertions, and slacken his speed? Will this setting out well, if succeeded by slothfulness, secure to him the prize? Or must the warrior wield his weapons with unflinching courage, and unfailing constancy, till the conflict is closed—and the racer strain every nerve, with unabated energy, till he reach the goal? And can it then be enough for the Christian warrior, or the Christian racer, to set out well? to enter, with high resolve, and glowing zeal, on their field of conflict—and *then*, in a little time, to relax their exertions, and to slacken their speed? Will *this* secure the crown of victory? Will *this* win the prize of their high calling? Or must not every energy be unceasingly exerted, every nerve be unremittingly strained, till death

comes to tell the warrior in the Christian conflict—"thy warfare is accomplished, and the crown of victory secured!" and to conduct the racer in the heavenward course to the wished-for goal, where he shall receive from the hands of the Almighty Judge the prize, for which he has so strenuously and successfully, because perseveringly, struggled; and which, with such self-renouncing humility, and adoring gratitude, he will delight to cast down at his beloved Redeemer's feet, acknowledging that he owes it entirely to *His* love, as it was His blood that purchased it for him, and His grace which supplied him with strength and patience, *so* to run as to obtain the prize. If these things be so, what can be more palpably inconsistent with the design of these images, what more directly at variance with their spirit, than to represent it as the natural course of events, in the believer's spiritual conflict, that the ardour, with which he enters upon it, should soon subside, and sink into comparative coldness—the energy of his exertions be damped—the speed with which he commenced his career be slackened—and every feature and movement of the divine life, whether in his inward experience, or outward walk, exhibit unequivocal symptoms of declension and decay.

CHAPTER VII.

RELIGIOUS DECLENSION.

If, from the images employed in Scripture, to illustrate the Christian's spiritual walk and warfare, we turn to the delineations, exhortations, and examples, left on record for our instruction, we shall find the same characteristic of the divine life exhibited in them all; even that of progressive advancement from one stage of strength and sanctification to another, still tending towards that perfection, which, though it should be incessantly pursued on earth, will not be fully attained by the believer, till he reaches heaven. How beautifully is this set forth by St. Paul, (2 Cor. iii. 18.) when he is stating the results of seeing the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ unveiled to the eye of faith, and declares, "We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord!" How

strikingly does this exhibit the believer's continual approximation, closer and closer, to the divine image—every feature of his character becoming, each day, more clearly the reflection of the Redeemer's; continually passing on from one degree of spiritual glory to a higher, by a continually increasing likeness to the Lord, in all His moral perfections, accomplished, as such a divine work alone could be, by the Almighty power of God the Holy Ghost! How affectionately does he express what alone could satisfy the ardent desires—the lofty ambition of his soul, on behalf of his beloved Corinthian converts, (2 Cor. xiii. 9.) "We are glad when we are weak, and ye are strong—and this also we wish, even your perfection." Or, as the same sentiment is more fully expanded in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, (iii. 10, 12, 13. v. 23.) "Night and day, praying exceedingly, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith—and the Lord make you to *increase* and *abound* in love toward one another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you—to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness, before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all His saints; and

the very God of peace sanctify you wholly—and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Make you to *increase* and *abound* in love; *stablish* your hearts *unblameable* in holiness; sanctify you *wholly*, spirit, soul and body. Are these the expressions of one, who calculated on the love of his converts to God their Saviour declining and growing cold; or who could be content with such a meagre exhibition, such a stinted growth, in the sanctification of those whom he loved in Christ, as too often, in the present day, are displayed even by those, whose claim to the character and hopes of the Christian we would feel reluctant to deny! How solemn the exhortation to his beloved Timothy (1 Tim. vi. 11.) "Oh! man of God, follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." We see here what is to be the constant attitude of the man of God—not merely resting on the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer —(though this *be* the only foundation, on which he is to rest his everlasting hopes,) but, "following after righteousness"—making it his continual aim and pursuit, to attain to the highest degree of personal righteousness, which can be attained

on earth! For what purpose, does he tell us, that* "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God—and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness?"

Is it not "that the man of God may be *perfect, thoroughly* furnished unto *all* good works?" No resting satisfied with the mere assurance of safety; with a scanty stock of a Christian's most appropriate furniture—good works; with a low standard of personal holiness; but "*perfect—thoroughly* furnished unto *all* good works!"

How does he mourn over the lamentable condition of many among the Hebrews, (Heb. v. 12—14.) who had made so little progress in the divine life, that they still continued, as it were, in an infantine state, and were thus excluded from that exalted enjoyment which would have been within their reach, from the unfolding of the deeper and more glorious mysteries of the Gospel dispensation, had they advanced, as they ought to have done, in the sanctifying knowledge of the truths they had been taught! Hear the apostle's complaint "for when, for the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first

principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strorg meat." Surely, in this complaint, we cannot recognize the language of one, who knew that even a stationary position, much less a retrograde movement, was essentially characteristic of the Christian's course, after the subsiding of the warm fervours of his first love, and zeal, and energy, in entering on his spiritual career.

How strikingly does St. Peter describe the Christian's course, as a continual progress in the pursuit of what soever things are lovely, and of good report. "Beside this," he says, "giving *all* diligence, *add* to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity; for if these things be in you, and *abound*, they make you that you shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Were every child of God thus ceaselessly employed in adding one Christian grace to another, weaving, as it were, into the texture of his character every attractive quality, which

shone so brightly in the only perfect pattern of excellence, the divine Redeemer, what a different aspect would the religious world wear! While the loftier virtues of the Christian, if one may so speak, were seen blended with the softer, and thus the Saviour's image was visibly reflected in His professing people, how would the world be constrained to feel, that there was a celestial stamp impressed on Christianity by the celestial character of its devoted followers! How would the more than earthly excellence of those who love the Lord, especially when exhibited in those qualities, enumerated by the apostle, which even the world can in some degree understand and appreciate, proclaim the divine original of the religion they desire to recommend—and, more eloquently than the most powerful and persuasive arguments or appeals, plead in its behalf; and compel the most prejudiced, if not to embrace its offers, and enlist in its service, at least to acknowledge its claims, and to admit that a system, which so manifestly moulded the character of its votaries into a heavenly cast, must have emanated from a heavenly source! Yes! if every high-toned professor of an evangelical creed displayed in his character the constellation of Christian graces, which the

apostle has so beautifully grouped together, the taunting sneer of the world, now so often justly provoked, would be for ever silenced, "What do these saints more than others?" And even those, who might not follow their example would be forced to esteem their excellence, and *feel* that the principles they profess must be indeed divine.

And how earnestly the apostle desired, that this continued progress, in spiritual attainments, might be exhibited in the characters and lives of those, to whom he wrote his epistle, may be inferred from its closing exhortation to them—"*Grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." He was not satisfied with the attainments they had already made in the divine life. He wished them to advance, further and further, in spirituality of affections, and devotedness to the service of a Saviour-God: and he knew, that in order to accomplish this most desirable result, they must "grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." As all vital godliness is at first implanted, and must be afterwards cherished, in the heart, by the power of divine grace; and all true holiness emanates from a sanctifying knowledge of the Lord Jesus

Christ. And, therefore, growth in grace will always be accompanied with growth in godliness; and an increase of knowledge of the Saviour's preciousness with an increase of zeal for His glory, conformity to His character, and love to His name. But the most solemn protest, recorded in Scripture, (except one,) against the erroneous opinion which we have been combating, is to be found in the expostulation, addressed by the Saviour Himself to the church of Ephesus. (Rev. ii. 4.) He had just borne the most favourable testimony to the patience, and labours, and faithfulness of that church. "I know," He says, "thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil; and thou hast tried them, which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars—and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted!" Now, after *such* a commendation as this, from *such* a source, what an emphasis of importance is stamped on the reproof, which immediately succeeds—"*Nevertheless*," notwithstanding all thy patience, and uncompromising faithfulness, and untiring labours, "I have somewhat against thee!" somewhat, for which, notwithstanding all these, I

cannot refrain from addressing you in the accents of severe rebuke! But what *can it be*, for which such a church is rebuked by the Son of God? Let every declining believer read, and tremble—"*because thou hast left thy first love.*"

And is there any reason to suppose, that the Saviour regarded this leaving of their first love, which must mean, as the context clearly proves, not desertion, but declension—not abandonment, but abatement of their first love, as so much the natural course of events, in the history of their spiritual experience, that it called for no strongly marked displeasure, no severe reprehension, on His part? Oh! what a fearful answer to this question is supplied by those alarming words, which are invested with ten thousand fold terrors by the consideration, that they were uttered by Him, whose nature and whose name is love!—"Remember therefore," He says, "from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Now surely every professing Christian, who clings to a hope of salvation, resting professedly on the Redeemer's imputed righteousness, and

at the same time is conscious to himself of a sensible decline in the affectionate fervour, and practical influence of the love, and zeal, and energy, with which he commenced his Christian course, ought to meditate deeply on the import of these awful words! And instead of reconciling himself to his state of declension, under a false impression, that it is exactly what he had reason to anticipate, as soon as the effervescence of his ardent feelings should subside, excited as they were, in the commencement of his career, by the novelty of the scenes and sensations with which he was conversant, when he experienced all the sweetness of his first love to the Saviour—should not this awful admonition, coming from the lips of Him, who assuredly will make every compassionate allowance for the infirmities of His faithful people, and who knows, with infallible certainty, how far any declension in the fervour of the first love of His true followers may be traced to any excusable source; should not, I say, *such* an admonition, coming from *such* lips, startle all declining Christians out of their dangerous slumber of false security into the awakened solicitude of godly fear; and stir them up to searching, prayerful self-examination, why they

have left their first love—why they have lost that warmth of affection, that glow of zeal, that energy of exertion, with which they set out on their heavenward course. Ought it not to call on them, loudly and persuasively, to repent with deep humiliation, and contrite sorrow; and to seek, by divine grace, to recover their lost ground, and never to rest satisfied till every Christian grace revives, and the lamp of faith and love burns even more brightly than before.

I observed that the warning to the Ephesian church was the most solemn protest in Scripture, against the guilt and danger of a declining state in religion, *except one*. For there is a yet more alarming declaration of the Redeemer's, on this subject, which ought assuredly to speak trumpet-tongued to all, who are conscious of declining in their Christian course. This declension, however small at first, must either be arrested in its progress, or it will inevitably advance, through the various stages of lukewarmness, indifference, coldness, and backsliding, towards open apostacy. Now just consider, I would say to the declining Christian, what are the feelings, with which the Saviour has told us, that He regards one of His professing people,

when advanced in this downward career as far as a state of lukewarmness, to which declension surely, and, in most cases, rapidly tends. Oh! weigh well those tremendously awful words, (enough, one would think, to strike terror into the most secure self-satisfied professor, who has sunk into a lukewarm state, and to force from him the most earnest prayers, that the Holy Spirit would kindle in his soul the flame of divine love and zeal,) those fearful words, perhaps the most severe the Saviour ever uttered, addressed to the Laodicean church, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: *I would thou wert hot or cold!* So then, *because* thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, *I will spue thee out of My mouth.*"

These are words, on which one is almost afraid to comment, lest their own intrinsic force should be weakened by the attempt to impress more deeply their appalling import! For when we reflect, by *whom* they have been pronounced, what human comment can add any thing to the terrific power of that wish, "I would thou wert cold or hot!"—and that threatening, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." How could even the Son of God Himself, with all conceivable resources of language and imagery at His

command, have adopted stronger or more startling, to convey the impression, that a state of lukewarmness in religion, (and to this, be it ever remembered, a state of declension uniformly tends,) is regarded by Him with feelings of peculiar contempt and abhorrence, and, if persevered in, must issue in final and everlasting exclusion from His presence.

It may be well, however, to endeavour to analyze the reasons, as far as we can presume to conjecture them, why a lukewarm state is so peculiarly offensive to the Son of God; as, the more clearly we perceive its exceeding hatefulness in His sight, we shall be led to watch more anxiously, (if we have indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have been taught to know, by our own sweet experience, the inestimable preciousness of His love and His salvation,) lest a chilling blight come over our spiritual feelings, affections, and energies; and thus, we shall be enabled to detect, and by divine grace arrest, the first symptoms of declension, alarmed by their tendency towards that lukewarmness, which called forth language of such fearful indignation and threatening from the Saviour's lips.

The reason, perhaps, why this state excites,

in so especial a manner, His deepest disgust and hatred, is because it pours such especial contempt on Himself, and all the manifestations of His love to sinners! Such a state, in a professing Christian, seems to say—I have carefully weighed the Saviour's claims on my heart and my life. I have maturely considered all He has done, and suffered for my sake. I have meditated on Gethsemane and Calvary, and the exhibition of His love for me, which He there displayed! And after the fullest investigation of His claims, I have come to the conclusion, that He is entitled *only* to the scant measure of gratitude and devotedness, which I mete out to Him! I do not feel that *He deserves* from me *warmer* love, or more *fervent* zeal, or more *energetic* efforts to advance His glory! This lukewarm state of feeling towards Him ought fully to satisfy Him! It is *all* He has a *right* to look for at my hands.

Now, surely, when we reflect *who* the Saviour is, and *what* He has done, in manifestation of His love for sinners, we cannot wonder, that such a state of feeling should be regarded by Him as offering Him the most studied and stinging affront, and must therefore provoke His *peculiar* indignation. It breathes the spirit of

such cool contempt towards Him—insults, with such a deliberate, calculating, self-complacent insolence of ingratitude, both His infinite majesty, and His unbounded loving-kindness—estimates His worth at such a Judas-like valuation—and thus contains within itself all the elements of that state of heart, which is even, in one sense, worse than diabolical, because even devils themselves are incapable of affronting, by such monstrous ingratitude and insult, a Saviour's love!

Surely, then, if it be the direct tendency of all spiritual declension to advance, by a progress more or less accelerated, towards this appalling condition, nothing more can be required than this single consideration, to open the eyes of every child of God to a full conviction of its guilt and danger, and to stimulate them to watch over their spiritual state with a godly jealousy; and, on the very first appearance of declension in the warmth, and influential energy of their love to the Saviour—their affectionate solicitude to promote His glory, and their strenuous exertions, in the use of all the divinely appointed means of grace, to arrive at the highest measure of personal holiness which is attainable on earth, to take the alarm, as knowing

that a work has commenced, which, if not at once checked, will soon effect the destruction at least of all their spiritual strength, and joy, and comfort! Should they not be constrained to pray most fervently, that the Holy Spirit, by His renovating power, would "strengthen the things that remain, and are ready to die"—would rekindle, by His divine breath, the almost expiring flame—and infuse new life and vigour into the exhausted spiritual system, till every symptom of declension is removed, and the spiritual pulse again beats with the full throb of recruited strength, and the glow of re-animation flushes over the whole spiritual frame, proclaiming that the Son of God is again enthroned in the heart, in rightful supremacy, and the Spirit of God is again shedding abroad all His enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting influences in the soul—breathing around it the atmosphere, and imparting to it the antepast of heaven!

And not only should the child of God be thus watchful to arrest, at its first appearance, that gangrene of the soul, which, if allowed to spread, will soon poison all the springs of spiritual strength and joy, and produce all the alarming symptoms of threatening mortification, but he should never rest satisfied, till he finds his

own spiritual experience realizing the full force of the beautiful scriptural images, to which we have before adverted; and is conscious of a continual progress in the divine life. So that each day he feels that he loves a Saviour-God more warmly, confides in Him more cordially, rejoices in Him more deeply, communes with Him more devoutly, serves Him more faithfully, and resembles Him more closely, than the day before—and thus feels that he is, each day, both nearer the possession, and more meet for the enjoyment, of the happiness of heaven!

And if, from the apostolic exhortations we turn to the apostolic example, what a beautiful harmony shall we find subsisting between them! Let us look to the writings of that apostle, who has thrown open his heart's inmost recesses to our view, in his epistles to his beloved converts, and there left on record a faithful transcript of his spiritual experience! And what a stamp of sincerity shall we there see impressed, by his own authority, on all his fervent appeals to those whom he loved in Christ, conjuring them, by every endearing motive which the constraining love of Christ could supply, with unreserved devotedness to love Him, who died for them; and with unwearied perseverance to follow after

that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord! How powerfully did he enforce by his example, what he so earnestly recommended by his exhortations! Was *he* content with the assurance of his acceptance in the Beloved, and the conviction, that "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, should be able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord?" Did this feeling of security lull *him* into a state of spiritual stupefaction? And because he rested his hopes of salvation exclusively on his Redeemer's imputed righteousness, did he therefore, relax in his exertions to promote that Redeemer's glory? Did *his* love to Him, who had bought him with His blood, wax cold, or his zeal decline, or his ardour in the pursuit of holiness abate, *because* he looked on heaven as secured to him, by his beloved Saviour's obedience to all the requirements of the divine law, in the character of his Substitute and Surety—an obedience unto death, even the death of the cross? Was this declension in love, and zeal, and devotedness, the result which *he* felt to emanate from his simple, undivided dependence on his divine

Redeemer's infinitely meritorious sufferings and righteousness?

Let the memorable record of his experience, which he has bequeathed to us, as a precious legacy, in his epistle to his beloved Philippians, (iii. 12—14.) supply the answer to these questions, and testify, on the apostle's behalf, how faithfully he practised what he preached: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but *this one thing I do*—forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before—I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus!" When we attempt to unfold the depths of spiritual experience, which lie hid in the apparently simple statement of these verses, what a wonderful range of glorious objects of contemplation is presented to our view! Does not the apostle's language expressively intimate, that he had raised the lofty ambition of his soul, (if one may so speak,) to the height of absolute perfection, in conformity to God's will and character, as far as this is attainable by a

created being! And that nothing short of this could satisfy the aspirings of his spirit, which panted after a purity as unsullied by sin, as the soul of the Redeemer Himself! Yes; entire devotedness to God's service—entire renewal in God's image: this—this was the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus, for whose attainment he strained every nerve, and struggled onward, with a continually increasing energy of exertion, which could be but feebly imaged by the most arduous efforts of the combatants, in the celebrated Grecian games. In this race towards perfection, he never allowed himself to be diverted by any interfering object. He never paused, to look back on the ground he had passed over; but still—forgetting the things that were behind, he pressed onward; his eye incessantly fixed, with straining glance, on the distant goal, where glittered—held forth in the hands of Him, who had purchased it for him with His own blood—the prize of his high calling, even the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, was to give Him in the day of his appearing! No attainments in sanctification, however exalted; no progress in love, or zeal, or devotedness to his adored Redeemer, however advanced; could satisfy his

ardent longings to be altogether "one with Christ"—entirely absorbed in Him, conformed to Him, consecrated to Him, identified with Him!

Yes, he indeed forgot the things that were behind. "Onward" was still the animating cry, that stimulated him to run, with unslackened speed, "the race set before him." He felt like the conqueror of old, who thought that nothing was done, while any thing remained to do! While a single sinful feeling stirred within his soul—while even a single sinful imagination past across his spirit—while a single sinner remained, whom he could hope to turn from death to life—or a single saint, whom he could help to sanctify or cheer, he felt that his warfare was not accomplished, or his work complete. That he must still wield the weapons of that warfare, with unremitting energy, and persevere in his labours of love, in his Saviour's cause, till death should terminate the conflict in complete and everlasting victory over sin, and perfect conformity to the image of a holy God; and he could say, with his Divine Master, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." For this, and nothing less than this, he knew that Christ Jesus had apprehended, had laid hold of him—arrested

him, in his mad career, on the way to Damascus—and turned his feet into the paths of peace: and therefore, he followed after this perfect devotedness and conformity to God, that thus he might apprehend—lay hold on that glorious object, for which he had himself been apprehended by the Lord!

If all who *profess*, with the apostle, to desire not to have their own righteousness, as the ground of their trust, but the righteousness of God, their Saviour, appropriated by a living faith, were equally desirous, with the apostle, to walk faithfully in that Saviour's footsteps, live devotedly to His glory, and be conformed closely to His character, what a blessed change would soon be visible in the aspect of the professing church in our day! Yea! and even were all, who *really* love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, as solicitous as St. Paul to attain to the highest standard of holiness, which a soul, renewed by divine grace, can reach, through the sanctifying power of God, the Holy Ghost, and as energetic and unremitting in its pursuit, what a halo of divine glory would soon be seen encircling the Church of Christ!

Oh! that the Holy Spirit would, for this

purpose, pour out His divine influences, in showers of spiritual blessings from above; and that all, who love the Lord, would unite, frequently and fervently, in prayer for such an outpouring." Oh! that He would kindle in every Christian's breast this unquenchable love of Christ, this inextinguishable thirst after holiness, this concentration of every energy and affection on the advancement of a Saviour's cause—and the imitation of His example! Then, indeed, would we feel warranted to address to the church the animating language of the prophet, and to say, "Arise! shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!" Most earnestly, then, would I entreat of every child of God, into whose hands this little work may come, to follow the example of St. Paul, in his continual pressing onward towards perfect holiness, and perfect devotedness, as the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus. Let all, whose eyes have been opened by the enlightening influences of the Blessed Spirit, to perceive and admire the divine beauty of holiness, adopt his motto for their own—"*this one thing I do*!" Let them be, as the apostle was, characterised by this distinguishing mark—as having but one aim,

living but for one purpose, even to glorify a Saviour-God by the most entire devotedness to His service, and conformity to His character, which the Spirit of God has ever enabled the most faithful of His servants to accomplish upon earth!

Let them not rest satisfied with the feeling of safety—as being sheltered beneath the shadow of the Saviour's cross, and the folds of the robe of his righteousness, from the wrath to come; although in this feeling of safety there be a blessedness, beyond what the tongue of men or angels could describe; and the righteousness of the Redeemer does indeed entitle all, to whom it is imputed, to expect an altogether exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Let them not, however, regard this sense of acceptance—this assurance of final and eternal glory, as the ultimatum of their desires and expectations; but rather as the starting-point, from which, with hearts overflowing with grateful love to the God of their salvation, they are to commence a career of Christian zeal, and Christian holiness, in which they are every day to advance, with continually increasing speed—kindling into warmer and more constraining love—and rejoicing with deeper and more hal-

lowed joy—and brightening into a clearer and closer resemblance to the Redeemer's image—and cherishing a more confiding and endearing spirit of communion with Him—and labouring to promote His glory with a more affectionate and absorbing zeal, as each day rolls on. Because each day has deepened their debt of gratitude to their Redeemer's love, by fresh manifestations of His amazing kindness towards them—fresh experiences of the tenderness of His sympathy, the watchfulness of His care, and the overflowing liberality, with which He pours out upon them all the spiritual blessings, all the riches of grace and glory, which, in the days of his flesh, He purchased for them with His infinitely precious blood; and which now, in the day of His exaltation to the right hand of the majesty on high, He delights to procure for them, by His all-prevailing mediation! And, oh, what blessings are too great, too glorious for them to expect, when *He*, God's own and only Son, as their Advocate with the Father, pleads on their behalf, that they may obtain what He as their Surety, bought for them with His blood, upon the cross.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I WOULD now proceed, according to the proposed plan, to suggest some hints, to assist a sincere and humble Christian in his endeavours to attain to such a standard of devotedness and holiness, as I have shown to be the scriptural one, exhibited in the Saviour's character, and enforced alike by apostolic exhortation, and apostolic example.

Were I, then, addressing myself to one, who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth, and felt, while confiding exclusively in His divine righteousness, that every motive of gratitude, which could influence a renewed heart, called on him to glorify his beloved Saviour by the exhibition of that conformity to His character, which, more powerfully than the most persuasive eloquence, recommends the Gospel to those that are as yet strangers to its spirit, and ignorant of its power, to that individual I

would affectionately offer a few suggestions, which I would earnestly pray that the Holy Spirit may vouchsafe to accompany with His blessing.

Keep continually before your mind, (combined with that desire to glorify the God of your salvation, which should ever be your paramount motive,) the powerful incentives which should stimulate you to the most ardent and energetic exertions, in the pursuit of perfect holiness!

Remember that to make you holy, even as God is holy, is the very object which the everlasting Father had in view, in choosing you as a vessel of mercy, and adopting you into His family of grace—the very object, for whose advancement the everlasting Son stooped to such amazing humiliation, and submitted to such inconceivable agonies, and such an appalling death, on your behalf—the very object which the Holy Spirit desires to promote, by all the enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting influences, which He pours into your soul. Yes! the Father chose you—the Son died for you—the Spirit abides with you—for the very purpose of renewing you in the divine image, and thus making you meet for the enjoyment of

an inheritance among the saints in light, in the presence of the Lord of saints.

Yes! dear Christian friend, God wishes you to be happy! He has given you the strongest possible proof of this, which even He, Almighty as He is, could give, for He spared not *His own Son;* and what proof of His love, greater than *this*, could even He give, than to give His own Son—one with Himself from eternity—to give *Him* for *your sake*, as a propitiation for *your sins*, to death—the accursed death of the cross!

And, Christian, *because* God loves you so well as not even to have withheld His own well-beloved Son, but to have delivered Him up for you to the death of the cross, and *because* He desires your happiness, with an earnestness of affectionate solicitude, of which the tenderest earthly father's fondest love is but the very faintest emblem, *therefore* has He determined to make you a partaker of His own holiness, since it is thus, and thus alone, that He can make you a partaker of His own happiness! Keep it, therefore, continually fixed in your mind and memory, that reliance on the Redeemer's righteousness is designed by Him to be the most powerful means of advancing your

progress in holiness; and also that every step of advance in holiness, which through the power of the Holy Spirit, you are enabled to gain, is an additional approximation towards the blessedness of God Himself. That He has so settled the constitution of His moral government on a basis, as unchangeable as His own perfections, that it is actually impossible for you to become holier, without this involving a sweet necessity of your thereby becoming proportionably happier. And that, if you desire, during your pilgrimage on earth, to acquire an advanced meetness for, or to enjoy an abundant foretaste of, the perfect felicity of heaven, where, seeing a Saviour-God as He is, face to face, you shall be like Him, pure as He is pure, and holy as He is holy, having this hope in Him, you will now "purify yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness, in the fear of God!"

Surely this is a most powerful stimulant, to rouse your every faculty to the most strenuous exertions, in the pursuit of that holiness, by which you thus become a participator in what constitutes the essential blessedness of God's nature, and the essential element of heaven's happiness. For what can stimulate you to run,

with united patience and ardour, the race set before you in the Gospel, if not the conviction, that by every advance you make in sanctification, you are more closely assimilated to the divine character; and drink deeper of the felicity of that Fountain, from which archangels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, drink the fulness of joy for evermore.

Or are you desirous of true glory? Do you feel within you the stirrings of an immortal spirit, that would grasp at something more exalted and capacious, than any thing created can supply? Here, here is an object, vast enough to fill the capacities—sublime enough to gratify the aspirations, of a soul, designed to find its satisfying rest and portion only in the infinite God.

Is not likeness to God, in that which constitutes the very essence of His glory—oh! is not this the highest glory, to which any created being can aspire. And should not holiness, therefore, be the object of your most ardent desires, your most unwearied pursuit? Could the highest archangel before the throne covet an honour, more suited to the most exalted and enlarged capacities of his immortal mind, than to be like the ever-blessed God, in that very

point, in which it is your glorious privilege to be made like Him—even His immaculate holiness? "Such honour have all His saints,"—not indeed in such a measure, while tabernacling in the flesh, as they will possess, when, emancipated from the body of sin and corruption, their disenthralled spirits bid an everlasting farewell not only to sin, but even to a single struggle against the temptation to sin, throughout the countless ages of a perfectly holy, and therefore, a perfectly happy eternity! But still, even here below, the child of God, who is so enamoured of the divine beauty of holiness, that the possession of this lovely object of his heart's fondest affections, is indispensable for his happiness, and who faithfully and perseveringly uses all the means, which God has Himself appointed, and which He may, therefore, be most confidently expected to bless, for the attainment of this object, he *will, assuredly*, arrive at such heights in holiness—such an abundant measure of the honour, emanating from likeness to God in those moral perfections, that constitute the essential glory of His divine character, as will open, as it were, a heaven within his soul—encircle him with a halo of celestial splendour, and thus most fully

exhibit the truth of that gracious promise of Jehovah's—"Those that honour Me, I will honour!"

Yes, dear Christian friend, honour God by the faithful improvement of every talent—the persevering putting forth of every effort, for the attainment of perfect holiness! Prove to God, that you are sincere in your professed desire to be holy, even as He is holy—and He will honour you, by bestowing on you such supplies of the strengthening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, as will enable you to carry on your spiritual warfare, triumphantly! To gain, every day, some fresh victory over sin and Satan; to advance, by a continual approximation, still nearer to the divine pattern of all excellence; to feel His love more powerfully constraining every inward affection of your heart, and every outward movement of your life, to an unreserved surrender—an entire devotedness to His happy service; and, by drinking more deeply into His Spirit, and being modelled more closely after His image—to enjoy more and more of that honour, which God alone can give, and which is the very highest even He Himself can bestow!

Now, in seeking to attain this object, I know

of no rule of more vital importance than the following—to combine the most unqualified dependence on the power of God, the Holy Ghost, for every step of progress you hope to make in the divine life, with the most unremitting exertion of all your own faculties, and the most diligent use of all the divinely appointed means of grace.

In fact, you ought to trust in the Omnipotent influences of the Holy Spirit, *as entirely*, as if you were not called upon to make a single effort of your own—and you ought to exert every faculty, and use every means, *as energetically*, as if all depended exclusively on your own exertions. It is this union of simple dependence with hearty exertion—this honest putting forth of your own strength, (albeit it may, in one sense, be justly designated very helplessness,) while you rely undividedly on the imparted strength which the Holy Spirit can alone supply, which will ensure to you abundant success in your struggles against your besetting sin, and your pursuit of perfect and universal holiness. The one honours God, by the confession of your utter impotence; and the other, by the display of your cordial sincerity.

To indulge in indolence, under the plausible

plea of leaving all the work of your sanctification to the Holy Spirit, that the glory of the work, as well as the power put forth in its performance, may undividedly be His, is gross hypocrisy, or deplorable self-delusion. To engage in the work with energy and zeal, but without feeling your need of divine strength, and imploring and leaning upon divine assistance, is as gross presumption, as deplorable self-ignorance.

But he, who, (while he feels and acknowledges his own helplessness, and therefore seeks, in earnest prayer, the influences of that blessed Spirit, "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy,") stamps, at the same time, sincerity on his supplications, by the honest and faithful employment of every means, which reason and revelation combine to point out, as calculated to conduce towards the attainment of the object, which he professes so earnestly to desire, *that man* will assuredly go on in his Christian career, conquering, and to conquer, every enemy that opposes his spiritual progress.

Nothing short of this hearty, energetic system of exertion, combined with the most implicit dependence on the divine power of the Holy Spirit, will either prove your sincerity, or

ensure your success, in your professed desire to be conformed to the image of the Son of God! By the very constitution of our nature, as originally established by its divine Author, (and all the arrangements of the Gospel-scheme harmonise therewith,) what we supremely value and desire to possess, we will exert every faculty, and employ every means within our reach, to secure! Look, in confirmation of the truth of this assertion, to the votaries of wealth, of honour, or of worldly happiness in its purest form—the happiness of hearts, which earthly love has blended into one. Look at the miser! With what unwearied exertion does he adopt every means, by which he can hope to obtain the object of his idolatry! With what sleepless vigilance does he watch over his accumulated treasures! Look at the ambitious man! What obstacles will he not surmount, what energies will he not put forth, what path of difficulty or danger will he shrink from pursuing, in his eagerness to climb to that height of human glory, which appears to his dazzled eyes as the very pinnacle of human happiness! Or look at the idolater in earthly affection. With what patience, with what ardour, will he strain every nerve, to triumph over the impediments which

threaten to defeat, or even to delay, the accomplishment of those hopes of happiness, which he has twined around the endearing visions of earthly love! Oh! well may it be said, that "the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light!" Christian, should not these examples stimulate *you* to put forth, *at least*, as much energy of exertion, as much persevering patience, in triumphing over every obstacle that may hinder, and employing every resource that may promote your success, in *your* efforts to attain the *object* of *your* supreme affections—of *your* exalted ambition? For, oh! is it not an object, infinitely more worthy of all the zeal and energy, that can be expended on its behalf, than all the gold that ever miser dreamt of, or all the glory that ever ambition aspired after, or all the happiness that the tenderest earthly love ever poured into the human heart?

What, oh! what, are all the riches of the earth compared with the "unsearchable riches of Christ?" What is all the glory of the world, compared with "the crown of glory, which fadeth not away?" What is all the happiness of earthly love, compared with the happiness that flows from the love of a Saviour-God, shed abroad in

the heart by the Holy Ghost; with the fulness of joy, in His presence in heaven; or with the foretaste of that fulness, which conformity to His will and character even on earth supplies?

Besides, believer, you have an additional encouragement to stimulate you, in pressing forward to gain the prize of your high calling, beyond what the votaries of this world can boast—the certainty of success in the pursuit, and perpetuity in the possession!

The best concerted speculations of the miser may fail, or thieves may break through his guarded house, and steal his piled-up treasures, and in a moment rob him of the accumulated wealth of years. The most promising prospects of the ambitious man may be disappointed; and in the very moment when he feels most confident of success, a more fortunate rival may wrest from his hands the glittering prize, which he had just grasped, and leave him to mourn, in all the bitterness of despair, over his blighted hopes; for, in the struggles of earthly competition, "the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." And, oh! how many unforeseen calamities may arise to embitter—how many unexpected contingencies occur to dash from the lips, the draught of earthly bliss,

even when flowing from its purest source—the fountain of domestic love! And even if these things should not be so, either death or the Son of Man *must* come, ere long, to tear away the miser from his beloved gold—the ambitious man from his pinnacle of glory—the idolater of earthly love from his happy home. And *then*, what doth it profit them to have enjoyed, for a few years, (were even the enjoyment unalloyed and satisfying: and it is far, indeed, from this!) what they must then give up for ever, and receive in exchange an eternity of inconceivable agony, shame, and despair!

Now, Christian, contrast with this the object of *your* pursuit—even the highest degree of sanctification, which the Holy Spirit, if faithfully followed, will enable you to attain. You are *sure of success*, for you are engaged in a pursuit, in which you have the faithfulness of God pledged, and the omnipotence of God promised and put forth, to secure to you that success! Yes; you know that in seeking to be holy, you are complying with the will of God—"for this is the will of God, concerning you, even your sanctification." You are certain, therefore, that you have God—even the Lord God Almighty—on your side: you have the adorable

Trinity interested in your success, and all the divine perfections enlisted on your behalf. No matter then how many, or how mighty, may be your enemies—no matter how formidable the difficulties, or how fierce the conflict, with which you have to contend—must you not feel assured of victory when you are fighting under the banners of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost!

Oh! it must assuredly be a most animating consideration, to reflect, that, where holiness is the object of your affections and pursuit, you cannot be too covetous—too ambitious—too eager in grasping the most accumulated treasures of this spiritual wealth—too aspiring in seeking to climb to the highest pinnacle of that glory, which conformity to the character of God confers. Enlarge, then, your desires after the entire renewal of your nature in the divine image, to the very uttermost extent! Raise your aspirations after perfect holiness to the very highest pitch. And *still* you may feel satisfied, that God, so far from being displeased at *such* covetousness, or *such* ambition, smiles on them with approving complacency, and will delight to crown your ardent desires, your lofty aspirations, with most abundant success!

See then, Christian warrior, what glorious prospects are here unfolded to your view! To think that you are engaged in a conflict, in which you are assured of final victory; that the Captain, under whose banners you fight, is Almighty, and leads on all his faithful soldiers, "conquering and to conquer;" that all the principalities and powers of heaven—a glorious cloud of witnesses—are the constant spectators of the combat, watching its every alternation with intense interest; attending continually on you, as ministering spirits; discharging with benevolent delight, their appointed offices of celestial love; and rejoicing, with most disinterested and generous joy, in every conquest you gain, every step of progress you advance, in your spiritual course! Yes, Christian, you are embarked in a cause, so identified with the glory of God, our Saviour, that you can feel assured that your success must give Him joy, as enabling Him to see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied! While every additional triumph you obtain spreads increased joy throughout heaven—for if there be joy, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth, assuredly there must also be joy among those blessed and benignant spirits over every

child of God, who is wal... ...thfully in a Saviour's footsteps, and ... ...ing continually in a Saviour's smile! Yes; a Christian, growing in grace, victorious over the enemies of his soul, is a sight, that must diffuse a glow of holy gladness through those heavenly hierarchies, who witness the combat with such benevolent interest, and are prepared to welcome the conqueror with such affectionate gratulations! Christian, are not these, indeed, animating reflections, to stimulate and encourage you in following after that holiness, which is, as we have seen, the very atmosphere of heaven—the very essence of its pure and perfect bliss! Be fervent, then: be unwearied in your pursuit!

But ever, while engaged in that pursuit, keep in your constant recollection, that in the work of your sanctification, as well as in your justification, the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ, and glorifies Christ, as all in all! Yes, it is the righteousness of Christ, on which you are exclusively to trust, *from first to last*, for acceptance with God, and eternal glory; and it is altogether essential to your walking acceptably and comfortably with your covenant God, in the path of holiness, that you keep this truth con-

tinually imp. on your heart, that you may abidingly cheris a filial spirit, humbly assured of your heavenly Father's love. It is the meritorious sufferings, and all-prevailing intercession of Christ, to which you are indebted, for the indwelling of that blessed Spirit, who has taken up His abode in your heart, to renew you in the image of the holy God. It is the cross of Christ, from which you are to draw the most affecting considerations, to inspire you with the abhorrence of sin, the love of holiness, and the most grateful solicitude to abound in the work of the Lord, and consecrate every talent you possess, yea! every moment of your time, to the advancement of His glory; feeling, that to be instrumental in glorifying Him, who died for you, is not merely your bounden duty, (for He has a right, as your Creator, and still more endearingly as your Redeemer, to the entire devotedness of your whole heart and life to His service,) but also your highest happiness, for His service is itself its own exceeding great reward! It is the glory of Christ, which you are to seek by your progress in holiness to promote. It is the character of Christ, which is the pattern of perfect holiness, after which you are to be modelled; and this glorious transformation can only

be effected by continual supplies of the Spirit of Christ. Thus you must ever remember, that it is only as being in Christ, the great fountain-head of divine influence, in whom all grace for His people is treasured up—only as being one with Christ—a member of His mystical body—a living branch of the True Vine, that you can bring forth fruit to God. And thus will every step of your progress in holiness still more endear to you that precious Saviour, to whom you owe all your salvation, and who is, indeed, the Alpha and Omega of all your blessings—and of all your bliss! Keeping these thoughts abid ingly in view, with what ardour should you engage in "following after holiness," when you reflect, that in this pursuit you are treading a path, in which the Divine Forerunner has gone before you—in which all His people, in every age, have trodden, and uniformly found, that it was indeed a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace—A path, in which you are cheered along by the encouraging approbation of all the angels of God in heaven, and the pleading prayers of all the members of Christ's mystical body on earth, the invisible and visible witnesses of your high and holy career—A path, on which the light of God's countenance continually shines—where

the track of the Saviour's footsteps is distinctly seen—where the sweetest whisperings of the Spirit's voice are breathed into the soul—where every step of progress is a step of advance towards the happiness and glory of the blessed God Himself—and which will, ere long, conduct you into His immediate presence, there to rejoice in perfect likeness to Him, and everlasting communion with Him, with joy indeed unspeakable, and full of glory.

And while you should be thus encouraged, Christian, by the assurance of success, in your pursuit of holiness, you should be still further stimulated by the prospect of perpetuity of possession. In choosing this pursuit as your all-in-all of happiness, you are choosing "that good part, which shall never be taken from you." Every acquisition you make in spiritual knowledge, light, and joy—every step of advance you gain in conformity to the character of God, is a source of wealth, of glory, and of happiness, of which nothing can deprive you. These are treasures, laid up in a secure place, where "rust and moth cannot corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal." This is a glory, of which a more successful competitor can never rob you; and which will never, of

itself, grow dim with age, or be tarnished in its lustre by the sullying breath of an ungodly world. This is a happiness, which no earthly change of circumstances can alter or affect. Poverty cannot steal it from you; sickness cannot waste it away; sorrow cannot embitter it; death cannot destroy it; eternity cannot exhaust it! Yea! so far from this, the happiness, which flows from holiness, is only deepened and endeared by those very afflictions, which wither and blight all earthly enjoyment. In the abode of poverty, it pours out its costliest treasures; in the chamber of sickness, it whispers its sweetest consolations; in the solitude of sorrow, it unveils its brightest visions; on the bed of death, it displays its noblest triumph; and through the ages of eternity, it will be for ever deepening, and for ever brightening, as the glorified spirit continually advances, closer and closer, to the Source of infinite perfection; and thus, having a fuller view of the divine glory manifested to its adoring gaze, as age after age rolls onward, and being continually admitted to increasing intimacy of access and communion, it passes on from glory to glory; everlastingly drawing deeper and still deeper draughts of satisfying bliss from the uncreated

Fountain of all true felicity! Oh! believer, what a happiness is thine, flowing from, or rather concentrated in, the blessed God—even Jehovah-Jesus—so secure, that death can only render it immortal; so inexhaustible, that eternity can only deepen its fulness, and increase its intensity, for ever! Child of God! is *such* the happiness, that the pursuit of holiness supplies? Then, *what* should be your ardour, your energy, your perseverance in its pursuit? How should it lead you to acquiesce, with the most cheerful satisfaction, in every appointment of your heavenly Father's hand, when you reflect, that His design in them all, (and His wisdom being infinite, He cannot be mistaken as to their suitableness to accomplish that design, for He is not *experimentalizing* with you,) is to bring about the very object, with which your own happiness is so inseparably linked! How should it dispose you to be resigned, yea to *rejoice* in your heaviest trials, when you remember, that He casts you into the furnace of affliction, in order that your soul being purified, in its refining fires, from the dross of earthliness, from the defilements of sin, may reflect, in clearer manifestation, the Redeemer's image in the beauty of holiness! And how should you instinctively shrink from every

thing, (however otherwise desirable,) which may tend to retard, and cordially welcome every thing, (however otherwise to be dreaded,) which may conduce to promote, the progress of that sanctification, which, the more it is advanced, makes you the more meet for glorifying God during your pilgrimage on earth, and rejoicing before Him, throughout eternity, in heaven!

CHAPTER IX.

THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICT.

HAVING thus, believer, suggested some of the animating considerations, which are calculated to stimulate and encourage you, in running the race set before you, I would again urgently impress on you the indispensable necessity of an unlimited dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit, to enable you to secure the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus.

As I have reminded you of the certainty of your success, and the perpetuity of your possession of the unspeakably glorious prize, which you pursue, I would also remind you, more particularly, of the dangers you must encounter, and the enemies with whom you must contend; that thus, feeling your own helplessness, and utter insufficiency, in your own unaided strength, to grapple with those dangers, and those enemies, you may be penetrated with a deep conviction, that you cannot advance a single step in the di-

vine life, without the upholding and strengthening influences of God, the Holy Ghost; and so may be urgent and unwearied in prayer, for His power to rest upon you, and His presence to abide with you, for ever.

In order, then, to be suitably impressed with the conviction, that you must incessantly lean on a strength better than your own, in running your heavenward race, ever keep in remembrance the hindrances you must expect to encounter, from the great enemy of your soul—from the world of temptation in which you live—and from your own corrupt nature, and deceitful and desperately wicked heart.

I.—Remember, that in Satan you must expect to find a determined opponent to your every exertion in the heavenward race. One, who will put forth every effort, which diabolical subtlety and malice, and the experience of near six thousand years in the work of deceiving and destroying the souls of men, can suggest, to hinder your success. This formidable adversary will exercise all that cunning, which entitles him to the appellation of the wily serpent, and all that power, which warrants his being styled the roaring lion—(yea! most awful title—"the god of this world,") to damp your ardour, and

defeat your efforts, in the pursuit of universal holiness. He knows, by his own experience, by the remembrance of what he once was, and the consciousness of what he now is, and must for ever be, how completely identified are holiness and happiness—sin and misery. He hates you with a peculiar hatred, because you are a child of God, and therefore he cannot bear to see you become increasingly holy, because he is fully convinced, that, in proportion as you are so, you *must* be increasingly happy.

Yes, he is well aware, from the recollection of what he himself felt, before he rebelled against his God, that there is a blessedness in having the principle of love and loyalty to God enthroned in the heart, and the impress of His image, in righteousness and true holiness, stamped upon the soul, to which no happiness, flowing from any other source, can for one moment be compared. In truth, that this love and likeness to God constitute the *exclusive* essence of true felicity; and therefore, *this* is emphatically, I had almost said exclusively, the blessedness he envies you, and which he will incessantly endeavour to hinder you from enjoying.

But, remember, Satan will not be satisfied with merely endeavouring to retard your pro-

gress in sanctification. He will exert himself, with fearful zeal and energy, to seduce you into some open sin, which would hide from you, for a season, the light of God's countenance—overshadow your soul with the gloom of the deepest anguish, and remorse—poison all your enjoyments, whether earthly or heavenly, in their source; and bring a foul blot on your Saviour's sacred cause—giving occasion to His enemies to blaspheme that holy name, for whose honour you should cherish such a godly jealousy—and for whose glory you should cheerfully, if called upon, lay down even your life.

Oh! Christian, do not imagine, because you are now, through grace, enabled to look on sin with that deep loathing of heart, which a single glance at Calvary's cross proclaims, in such affecting language, that it deserves, that you are altogether beyond the reach of the danger, to which I allude. Do not presumptuously flatter yourself, that you could not be seduced by Satan, into any palpable and grievous transgression of God's holy law! Remember the solemn warnings, held up before you in Scripture, on this subject, in the faithfully recorded falls of so many of the most eminent servants of God. Look at Abraham, the father of the faithful,

the friend of God, sheltering himself from apprehended danger, by the most contemptible species of falsehood—predetermined equivocation—and seducing the wife of his bosom, his beloved Sarah, into a participation of his crime!

Look at Moses, the meekest man alive, betrayed by sudden provocation into impatience, and open dishonouring of God. Hear him speaking "unadvisedly with his lips." See him performing a miracle, in the heat of unhallowed passion, and thus provoking a righteous God, (in order to mark His abhorrence of sin, *especially* in the objects of His electing love, whom He has admitted to the most intimate communion with Himself,) to deprive him of the high honor of conducting the Israelites into the promised land, which he was not allowed to enter himself, but only to look on its outstretched prospect of fertility and glory from a distant mountain-top!

How unanswerably does this prove, that God hates sin in His own people, with a peculiar abhorrence, as being peculiarly aggravated by the ingratitude and insult it offers to His love.

Why need I speak of David—the man after God's own heart—the author of those precious psalms, which have assisted the devotions,

cheered the spirits, and rejoiced the hearts of the saints of God, in every age? Oh! look at *him*, branded with the foulest crimes, in the black catalogue of human guilt; and learn to what a fearful extent of transgression even a child of God may be hurried, if, by unwatchfulness, and neglect of prayer, and of keeping close to God, he give himself up to the suggestions of the enemy of his soul.

Or look, yet again, at Peter—the warm-hearted, zealous Peter—him, who loved his divine Master with the deepest, the most ardent, the most grateful love—who felt *confident*, that though all men should deny Him, yet he never would; but, with unflinching courage, and unfaltering faithfulness, would cheerfully go with Him to prison, and to death. Oh! look at *him*, in the hall of the high priest's house, on that night, to be much remembered by him, throughout eternity! Listen to *him* denying, with oaths and imprecations, that he ever knew the Man; aye, the incarnate God, who had become a Man of sorrows, for his sake. Listen to the ungrateful denial of his dear, his divine Master; the base lie; the horrible curses, trembling on his lips; and, whatever be the measure of your present love to the Redeemer, or your confi-

dence of assurance, that *you could never* be thus tempted to deny Him, who bought you with His own blood, "be not high-minded, but fear." "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation!" Distrust, altogether, your own wisdom, your own strength, your own firmness of resolution, or steadfastness of purpose; and trust, simply and confidingly, in the wisdom, the strength, the interceding supplication of your Almighty Saviour, Guardian, and Friend; and the divine presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who can alone enable you to bruise Satan under your feet; and to triumph over every temptation, by which the wily serpent may seek to seduce you into sin.

In every fall of the people of God, which Scripture proclaims, learn an affecting lesson of your own helplessness; of the strength and subtlety of Satan; and of the necessity of your continually leaning for support, and resting for safety, on the almighty arm of a covenant-keeping God! Hear, in every recorded transgression of God's dear saints, a solemn voice, loudly crying out to you, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!" And while the fearful display, thus exhibited before you, of the tremendous power, which Satan is permitted to exercise

over even the children of God, fills you with utter self-despair, and convinces you of the desperate madness of attempting to cope with *such* an enemy, in your own strength, let this only inspire you with a more cheerful confidence in the faithfulness and omnipotence of your divine Protector, and a firmer resolution to cling closer to Him, and to seek fuller supplies of His Spirit, which will ensure to you, in your spiritual conflict, triumphant and everlasting success.

II.—Another hindrance, which you must expect to encounter, in running the race set before you, and which the power of the Holy Spirit can alone enable you to overcome, will arise from the world, through which you have to pass, on your way to your heavenly inheritance. It is a world, so directly opposed, in its maxims, its principles, and its influences, to the will and word of God, that much contact with it, even when you only mingle in its scenes and its society at the call of duty, unless a special supply of grace be vouchsafed, will be deeply prejudicial to the progress of your sanctification.

In truth, the very atmosphere of this world is so impregnated with enmity against God, and utter alienation of the affections from every thing

spiritual and holy, that it is impossible to be much exposed to its pestilential breath, without running a fearful risk of imbibing such a measure of its infectious influence, as will blight the tender buds of spiritual life, and chill the warm glow of spiritual love!

Like the damp vapour of a dungeon, which makes the lamp, that is introduced into its noxious air, burn dim, the atmosphere of the world, if you unnecessarily expose yourself to its influence, will make the lamp of faith and holiness burn with a pale and sickly gleam. And even if your exposure to that influence be the unavoidable result of the circumstances, in which the providence of God has placed you, oh! it is only those children of God, who have been compelled, by secular engagements, to come in close and frequent contact with the children of the world, (I mean, of course, *professionally*, not *socially*; for a child of God cannot consistently seek the society of the world, or take any part in its ungodly amusements,) that can form any adequate conception, how difficult it is, in such circumstances, to maintain a high tone of spirituality, and to exhibit an elevated standard of character. How difficult to cherish, and to manifest, the exalted feelings

and principles of a child, and heir, of God, when surrounded by associations, which chain down the thoughts and solicitudes to earth, and earthly things, and have a direct tendency to induce a forgetfulness of God—and holding intercourse with individuals, who would receive any allusion to a Saviour's love, or service, or glory, with the cold silence of indifference, or the scornful smile of contempt. Now, the ways, in which the world will endeavour to retard your progress in the pursuit of scriptural holiness, are various, and will be exerted, under the direction of him, who is emphatically styled in Scripture "the god of this world," with the most subtle adaptation to your peculiar tastes, and temperament, according as they may expose you more easily to be ensnared by its pleasures, or engrossed by its cares.

Indeed, I know no light, in which a child of God should more habituate himself to view this world, than as a great store-house of temptations, suited to every age, rank, and circumstance of life, which Satan employs, with appalling success, to deceive and destroy his victims; and to ensnare, as far as he is permitted, even the children of God into such idolatry of earthly objects, or such conformity to worldly

principles, as will involve them in the guilt of unfaithfulness to their God, and thus at once impede their advancement, and mar their enjoyments, in the divine life?

To some, the world appears to wear its most seductive form; and, with siren voice and smile, promises to impart to them satisfying happiness in its unsatisfying pleasures and pursuits; and thus tempts them to forsake the fountain of living waters, and to hew out to themselves broken cisterns, which can hold no water of such invigorating or reviving influence, as to refresh the fainting spirit, wearied in its fruitless search to find in the world what is only to be found in God! Now, as the very essence of true holiness consists in that supreme love to God, which leads us to seek our happiness in conformity to His character, submission to His will, and devotedness to His service, it is manifest, that in whatever proportion we are tempted to look to the world for that solid satisfaction—that heart-rest, which it is the exclusive prerogative of God to impart—our progress in holiness must be proportionably retarded. For, if once the love of God be dethroned from its rightful supremacy in our affections, and *any* idol, which the world holds up for us to worship,

(be it even the most deservedly beloved of earthly objects!) be substituted in its stead, the progress of our sanctification must be impeded—since the very principle, whose ascendancy in our hearts is the instrumental means, which the Holy Spirit employs in carrying it on—even the supreme love of a Saviour-God, is suspended, in its sanctifying operations—and thus a formidable barrier opposed to the progress of the work. With others, the world wears a more threatening form, and arrays itself in the garb of persecution, to intimidate those who have entered on their Christian career, and thus prevent them from attaining to those heights of holiness, to which they aspire; and alas! to how many has the fear of the world's censure or contempt proved an appalling snare! In this respect, a man's bitterest foes are often those of his own household; for so deeply-rooted is the enmity of the natural heart against God—so irreconcilable is the hatred, with which the manifestation of uncompromising faithfulness, and decided devotedness to a Saviour's service, is uniformly regarded by the children of this world, that no closeness of relationship, no meekness of spirit, no amiability of character, no consistency of conduct will avail, to shield from at least the

petty persecution of ridicule and scorn those, who, in the bosom of an unconverted family, are called out of the darkness, in which its other members are involved, into the glorious light of Gospel-truth, and who are constrained, by the love of Christ, to surrender up themselves unreservedly to His service. And it is only those, who have felt its bitterness, that can at all appreciate the agony of the trial, to a tender and sensitive heart, all whose affections are only rendered, by the influence of Christian love, more intense, and more deeply interested for the true welfare of the objects, round whom it has entwined its fondest feelings, to see the chilling look of estrangement in countenances, where once it saw only the smile of the warmest love; and to hear the unkind insinuation, the cutting sarcasm, or the angry rebuke, from lips, which once were opened only to pour forth the language of sympathising affection. Oh, surely to bear up under all this unmerited unkindness— to pursue, amidst such harassing persecution, the heavenward race, with undamped zeal, and undiminished ardour—not to allow such irritating provocations to kindle a spark of resentment, or force a word of retort—but, so far from requiting coldness with coldness, or railing with

railing, to exhibit the most unequivocal manifestations of a meek spirit, and a loving heart, yearning, in all the tenderness of Christian affection, for the spiritual welfare of those, who seem to take a cruel delight in wounding that heart, and thus to repay their continued unkindness by increasing efforts to promote their everlasting happiness—Oh! *this* is no ordinary triumph of divine grace! *this* must require no ordinary supplies of the strengthening and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit! And even when enmity against the presence and power of vital godliness does not break forth in such open and active manifestations of its odious nature—when it is only exhibited in the chilling apathy, which repels every effort that Christian love can prompt, to awaken those, for whose everlasting interests it feels the deepest solicitude, to a sense of their spiritual danger, even then, what a dead weight it is on the aspirations and the energies of the Christian character—how it aggravates the difficulty of the conflict, that has to be unceasingly carried on with indwelling corruption, and the power of Satan, to breathe continually an atmosphere, so uncongenial to spirituality of heart and life! Never to meet one encouraging smile, never to hear one cheering word, even from those

you love most fondly, to stimulate and strengthen your fainting spirit, in running its heavenward race! And when you feel constrained, out of the abundance of your heart, to speak of His love, who *so* loved us, and laid down His life for us; oh! how it crushes the spirit, to find the precious theme, which kindles such rapturous emotions among the hosts of the redeemed in heaven, and ought to awaken such glowing gratitude in the breast of every sinner upon earth, that has heard the glad tidings, how it crushes the spirit, to find *that* theme listened to, in cold silence, without a single responsive echo to the voice of praise for a Redeemer's boundless self-sacrificing love. What close, what constant communion with God, in the retirement of the closet—what fond and faithful leaning on the arm of the Beloved—what continual reliance on Almighty strength—what fervent supplications for supporting and refreshing grace, are indispensably required, to enable a child of God, under *such* circumstances, to maintain unimpaired the high tone of spirituality, and heavenly-mindedness, which the Gospel-standard presents! And not merely not to retrograde, but to advance in the Christian course, continually progressing in zeal, and devoted-

ness, and conformity to the Saviour's image, while encompassed by every hindrance, which continual contact with the essential spirit of worldliness, embodied in the very beings whom he loves best, (as far as the love of earthly objects is concerned,) can supply—and divested of every assistance, which Christian counsel, communion, and sympathy so abundantly afford.

III.—Another hindrance, which will greatly oppose your progress, in the pursuit of holiness, will arise from the workings of your own deceitful and desperately wicked heart, and the remaining corruption of your imperfectly renewed nature. For though the Holy Spirit has implanted in your heart a new principle, which, as emanating from Him, partakes of His own nature, and is therefore sanctifying in its operations—though He has taught you to love, with the most grateful affection, that adorable Redeemer, who has loved you, with a love that passeth all knowledge; and for His sake to hate sin—all sin—with the most cordial hatred; and to desire, sincerely and supremely, to live in all things to His glory—though He has kindled in your soul an unquenchable aspiration after the highest degree of holiness, which you can reach, by continually pressing

forward to this as the prize of your high calling, in Christ Jesus, still you must expect to encounter continual opposition from the principle of corruption, which, though subdued, so far as to be no longer predominant in its power over you, still lurks within you, (dethroned, indeed, but not entirely destroyed,) and will be constantly striving to regain its former ascendancy. Nor will you be freed from the assaults of this inward enemy, till death is commissioned to announce to you, that "your warfare is accomplished;" and by delivering you from the body of sin, will deliver you from its temptations for ever—so that you shall never once experience their power—no, not so much as to suggest even a single sinful thought, throughout eternity.

Till, therefore, the period of your release, believer, shall arrive, and you receive your honourable dismissal from the Captain of your salvation, and are permitted to say, with Simeon of old, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word!" you must calculate on experiencing the truth of the scriptural delineation of the scene of conflict, that is carried on continually in a Christian's breast; where "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these

two are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Often must you expect to realize the agonizing experience of the great apostle of the Gentiles, and to find, that when "you would do good, evil is present with you, so that the good you would, (that is, the good which you honestly and heartily desire,) that you do not, (do it not as constantly and perfectly as you would wish;) and the evil you would not, (the evil you cordially loathe, and long to avoid,) that you are often, with all your watchfulness, betrayed into doing—so that you are compelled with St. Paul, to exclaim, "Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"

Now, Christian, though you are assured of final, complete and everlasting victory in this conflict, you must remember, that in your deceitful heart you have the most dangerous of all enemies to contend with, even a traitor within, in the very centre of the citadel. You must therefore expect the warfare to be indeed arduous, and will require the most incessant watchfulness against the snares of this secret foe, who is ever ready to betray the fortress to the enemy of your soul! And you must combine with this the most unwearied supplications,

that the Almighty Captain, under whom you fight, may cover your head with the invisible shield of His presence, in every day of battle; and that the Holy Spirit may supply you with such abundant measures of His grace, as will make you even more than conqueror in the awful, yet glorious warfare, in which you are engaged.

As Pharaoh of old pursued after the Israelites, enraged at their having been rescued from the bondage, in which he had so long held them enthralled, and determined to recover his lost prey, that he might again make them bond-slaves in the land of Egypt, even thus will Satan endeavour to drag you back again into the debasing captivity, from which your adorable Redeemer has rescued you, that he may once more bind around your soul the galling chains, by which you were so long fettered, and again employ all your energies in his cruel and degrading service. And alas! believer, your emancipated affections, which that Redeemer has brought out of the land of their captivity, with a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm, that they might serve Him with a glad and grateful zeal, will be often but too like the Israelites of old, lusting to go back to Egypt—hankering after the flesh-pots of that place of bond-

age—instead of panting after the promised pleasures of the Canaan before you—and this, even though you have been privileged to see, ay, and to taste, the rich clusters of goodly grapes, which faith has brought to you from that glorious land; and which ought to kindle in you such an ardent and unquenchable desire to go up, and possess the land of your inheritance, where you shall feast on that fulness of joy, in the immediate presence of your Saviour-God, of which you have already been supplied with such delightful foretastes, while journeying on through the wilderness to the land of promised and eternal rest!

It is this, which gives to the Christian life so much of the character of a warfare—the conflict between the corruptions that cling to earth, and the aspirations that soar to heaven. The heart of the believer is, in truth, a strange anomaly; and its experiences often perplex, amaze, and overwhelm with shame and sorrow, the most devoted and advanced of the children of God! The love of God, his Saviour, is decidedly enthroned in the Christian's heart; and in his fixed estimation he esteems the Lord Jesus, as "the pearl of great price—the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely;" yet is he

often tempted, for some trifling gratification, to offend that Saviour, whom he supremely loves; and to prove practically, that some earthly object has been permitted so to rival Him, that the happiness, which ought to be sought primarily, if not exclusively, in that Saviour's smile, is linked around some idol, which has been allowed to usurp, for a time, His place and prerogative in the heart. He regards, and gratefully appreciates prayer, as a most precious privilege—a medium of delightful communion with his Father in heaven—and a channel, through which all needful supplies of divine grace will be conveyed into his soul; yet he often approaches it, not in the spirit of a child, delighting in the society of a Father whom he loves, but of a slave, trembling in the presence of a Master whom he fears; and retires from it, rather as one escaping from a painful restraint, than as one withdrawing from the converse of his best and dearest Friend! He regards the Bible as the Book of Books—the treasury of his most precious and most prized hopes, and joys, and consolations—for even the least of which, he would deem the wealth of the whole world but a poor exchange. Yet, often, he reads the blessed Book, as if he felt no interest

in its glorious and gracious tidings; yea! sometimes with almost a reluctance to engage in the hallowed study, that actually fills him, on reflection, with horror; and not unfrequently he peruses its precious pages, to satisfy the clamours of conscience, rather than to enjoy sweet communion with the Beloved of his soul—to hear with grateful reverence, what the Lord his God has to say to him, in the way of counsel or consolation, of warning or encouragement—or with delight to search the Scriptures diligently, *because* they testify of Christ!

He has carefully weighed the things of time, and the things of eternity together, in the balance of the sanctuary; and he has found the former to be, in comparison of the latter, lighter than vanity itself—and yet, he is continually prone to feel and to act, as if the things of time were infinitely important, and the things of eternity the merest trifle. He knows the utter worthlessness of the world's friendship, and the world's applause; yet is he for ever in danger of descending from his high and holy principles, to court the one; and of making unlawful compliances and concessions, to gain the other. He believes that the arrangement of all the events of his life is in the hands of infinite wisdom,

faithfulness, and love; and yet is deplorably prone to quarrel with the mode, in which his covenant-God is fulfilling His gracious promise, of making all things work together for his final and eternal good! He feels assured that the great God, his Saviour, gave *Himself* for him, to death--even the death of the cross--to secure his *eternal* happiness; yet often seems to doubt, if He loves him well enough, to give him some trifle on which he has foolishly fixed his heart; for what is earth's most precious blessing, when compared with him, except, at most, a *precious trifle*? He can trust his God for all the glories of heaven, yet distrust him for a little of the dross of earth—believes He has prepared for him a throne above the skies, purchased with His own infinitely precious blood; yet suspects that He will neglect to provide him with what is necessary for his real welfare, on his way to take possession of that blood-bought throne! He knows Satan to be the father of lies; yet is often tempted to believe his suggestions, in preference to the plain and positive declarations of his God. He cordially hates sin, as the very essence of enmity against a gracious God—the cause of all his beloved Saviour's sufferings—the accursed and only thing, which a holy God

hates; yet is often parleying with its temptations, and in danger of seeking for gratification in some pursuit or pleasure, from which the remembrance of Gethsemane and Calvary ought to make him recoil, with an instinctive abhorrence, as intense as his gratitude to a Saviour-God. He supremely loves holiness, and desires to possess it, as the very essence of likeness to the blessed God, and therefore of the happiness and the glory, which has been purchased for him by his Redeemer, at such a costly price; and yet is often damped in his ardour, or turned aside from the right path, in pursuing this prize of his high calling, by some trifling snare, which ought not to have retarded his progress for one moment, even had the prize he was pursuing been only a crown of fading laurel, and not the crown of glory which fadeth not away. These are some of the painful contradictions, which are too often realised in the experience even of the children of God, and which make the believer's life such a continual conflict, requiring such continual supplies of the Holy Spirit's divine influence, and render his heart such a strange anomaly, a wonder and a riddle, even to himself—and oh! what a spectacle, to try the patience of his heart-searching, yet long-suffering

God, whose unconquerable love triumphs over all this waywardness and ingratitude, and, in spite of it all, brings the believer safe to heaven.

In adverting to your spiritual conflict, child of God, there is one further important caution I would suggest; that, while it is desirable, that you should continually keep in view the *general* tendency of the corrupt principle, which still struggles for the mastery in your soul, that you may be stimulated to continual watchfulness, and prayer for divine guidance and strength, it is especially desirable, that you should watch and pray with peculiar earnestness against the assaults of the sin, that doth most easily beset you.

In every individual, there is a predominant influence of some peculiar propensity or passion, whether arising from constitutional temperament, acquired habits, local circumstances, or any other cause.

Some persons are naturally of a softer, and some of a sterner cast of character—the former are more inclined to the voluptuous, and licentious—the latter to the resentful, and malignant feelings of our fallen nature! With some pride, with some ambition, with others covetousness, is the besetting sin. Some are disposed to set

too high a value on the opinion and regard of this world—and others are prone to love the objects of earthly affection, with the absorbing devotedness of idolatrous attachment. With many, an irritable temper, kindling into passion, or sinking into sullenness, at the slightest provocation, is at once the plague of their own peace, and the bane of the domestic circle, in which they live; and many more poison the very atmosphere they breathe, by the pestilential vapours of a bitter and censorious spirit, delighting to drag forward the faults and failings of others, and to comment, with uncharitable severity, on every character that is brought before them; always, where the action is doubtful, imputing the worst motive, and throwing suspicion even on the purest and noblest displays of human excellence.

Now there is nothing, which will more decidedly test a professing Christian's sincerity, as to the desire he expresses for the attainment of the high standard of holiness, which the Gospel holds forth, than to observe how he deals with his besetting sin. If he is sincere in his professed desires, on the subject of his sanctification, to overcome *this* will be the especial object of his vigilance, his exertions, and his

prayers. Finding that this besetting sin is pre-eminently the weight, that hinders him in running his heavenward race, in proportion as he honestly and heartily desires to run that race, not merely with patience, but also with continually increasing alacrity and speed, in the very same proportion will he honestly and heartily strive against the sin, which he discovers by experience to be his greatest hindrance, in the pursuit of the prize, for which he so earnestly contends. Against this sin, therefore, he will, as it were, concentrate his spiritual forces, that, through the power of the Holy Spirit he may triumph over its temptations, and bring its every working into captivity to the obedience of Christ. This—this peculiarly is the sin, of which, in the honest indignation of his heart, he will exclaim "down with it—down with it—even to the ground." No matter how long it may have been cherished, no matter how closely it may have twined itself round every fibre of his heart, no matter what agony the sacrifice may cost, though the separation be as the severing asunder of soul and body—it *must* be sacrificed, it must be brought forth, without reserve, and hewn in pieces before the Lord! Is it a right eye that offends? The right eye

must be plucked out! Is it a right hand that causes to sin? It must immediately be cut off! Whatever else is spared, this at least must meet with no quarter! Against the besetting sin irreconcilable war must be waged! The Canaanite must not be suffered to dwell in the land! No truce, no compromise, nothing short of perpetual hostility, for the purpose of utter extermination.

Such will be the resolution—such the conduct of the sincere Christian, who really desires to be holy—even as God is holy. But the insincere professor will betray his hollowness, by an exactly opposite line of conduct, in dealing with his besetting sin! He will plead every palliation, which a deceitful heart can suggest, on its behalf—he will throw the blame on the peculiar temperament of his natural constitution, (an insinuated charge against his Maker!) or on the force of the temptations, by which he is assailed, or on the long indulgence of the habit, by which it has become as a second nature. He will sacrifice any thing and every thing, but *this bosom lust*, this darling object of his idolatrous affections. This is the Herodias he cannot part with. This is the Agag he will not sacrifice! And *this*, no matter what else he is ready to

give up—this stamps insincerity on all his professions of grateful love to a holy God, and earnest desire to live to His glory! For were those professions sincere, the besetting sin, as we have already seen, would be the very first victim, slain on the altar of the Lord, in token of unreserved surrender of all to His service, and an honest solicitude to put away every stumbling-block of iniquity, which would provoke God to hide from him the light of His countenance—would bring discredit on the cause of Christ—and impede his progress in the pursuit of holiness.

Now, Christian, in order to be animated with the holy ardour of a righteous indignation against your besetting sin, as peculiarly the object of your uncompromising hostility, habituate yourself to view it in the light of the cross. It is only by viewing it in *this* light, that you will be able to regard it in its true character, to hate it with the cordial hatred it deserves, or to strive against it with the energy which you ought to exert.

When you contemplate your adorable Redeemer—Him, who so loved you, as for your sake [illegible] descend from His throne of glory in the heavens, to a life of sorrow, upon earth, and a

death of shame upon the cross—when you contemplate Him, "wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities"—when you behold Him crushed even to death beneath the burthen of your imputed guilt; oh! must not this inspire you with an inexpressible abhorrence of all sin, and pre-eminently of the sin that doth most easily beset you, because it is this sin, which has formed, for the past, so large a proportion of your contribution to that appalling weight of anguish, which overwhelmed His soul; and it is this sin, which more perhaps than any other will expose you, for the future, to the danger of dishonouring His holy name, and, by any palpable inconsistency in your conduct, putting Him to an open shame before that world, to which the sins of His professing people give such occasion to blaspheme! Whatever then may be the temptations, to which you are exposed, by reason of that sin which cleaves most closely to you, however powerfully it may plead for indulgence on any ground which the father of lies, or your own deceitful heart may suggest—I conjure you to view that sin in the light of your beloved Saviour's "agony and bloody sweat—His cross and passion,"—and assuredly you will feel such a hor-

ror arising in your heart, at the idea of voluntarily cherishing, as a bosom-friend, the accursed enemy and murderer of the Saviour, who, in His stupendous love, laid down His life for you, that you will put forth all the energy of fervent prayer, incessant watchfulness, and continual striving, in dependence on divine strength, to crucify this traitor to the Lord you love, and exhibit your loyalty to Him, by sacrificing all that appertains to it at the foot of His cross!

And oh! believer, what a delightful and encouraging reflection, that, in proportion as you triumph over your besetting sin, you will at once bring increased glory to God, in the highest, and increased happiness unto your own soul! We have already proved, that so altogether identified are holiness and happiness, that it is actually impossible for you to advance in the former, without a proportionable advancement in the latter—and therefore every conquest you gain over the sin, which most easily besets you, and has most frequently overcome you, is the removal of one of the chief hindrances, which have prevented your attaining to that close conformity to the divine character, in which the very essence of your felicity consists; and thus becomes an additional step of approximation to-

wards the standard of perfect holiness, at which you aim, and therefore towards the summit of perfect happiness, to which you aspire.

The other most animating consideration, Christian, is, that you will thereby most abundantly bring glory to God!

I was once much struck with an observation, which I heard from one of the most faithful and devoted ministers of our day, (one, not more distinguished for the most effective pulpit eloquence, than for the deepest Christian humility —the tenderest Christian love,) that "Christ's honour is committed to His people's keeping!"

Oh! were this constantly remembered, and consistently acted upon, by those who love the Lord, what godly jealousy would it excite in them, what holy watchfulness, what fervour of prayer, and energy of exertion, that all their conduct might be so closely modelled after the example of their Divine Master, that those who observed them most carefully, it may be with the most malignant purpose, might be constrained to take notice of them, that they have been with Jesus—and from this divine communion have caught a reflected lustre, of holiness, which shines, before men, with such heavenly light, as compels them to glorify God!

Be assured, there is nothing, which would compel a more honourable testimony in favor of vital godliness from the men of the world, than witnessing the triumph of real Christianity, as displayed in the visible change wrought in its votaries, in those features of their character, which come under the cognizance of the world; and which, before their having embraced what are commonly called serious, but what might more properly be termed happy, views, were most opposed even to that standard of moral excellence, which the world itself acknowledges and esteems.

The great apostle of the Gentiles appears to recognize such a standard, when he calls on professing Christians to think of, and to practise, "whatsoever things are *lovely, and of good report!*" There are certain qualities, such as integrity, veracity, sincerity, purity, gentleness, benevolence, forgivingness, and such like, which even the children of the world admit to be entitled to the homage of their approbation. And though, in a child of God, these will be regulated on higher principles, adopted from purer motives, and directed to nobler ends, than with the children of the world; still as their outward developments will be so much the same,

whatever the diversity of the inward principles from which they proceed, it is the bounden duty of every real Christian, as he values the honour of God, his Saviour, not merely to equal, but to excel, the most upright, and honourable, and amiable of the children of the world, in those qualities, which that world and the Gospel alike recommend, and uphold. For it should ever be remembered that though there is, what may be called, a hidden spiritual glory of the Christian character, which the world cannot see, because it is spiritually discerned, there is also, in that character, an outward and visible glory, which the world can perceive, and must admire, however reluctantly it may pay the homage of its admiration.

In truth, there are a great many important particulars, in reference to which, the world has a very correct judgment of what a Christian *ought to be*—and he is indeed unfaithful to his Divine Master, and most ungratefully regardless of His glory, who does not take heed that in those particulars, the world shall be compelled to bear testimony on his behalf, that his character is so accordant with the standard, which the Gospel sets forth, and therefore so honourable, estimable, and amiable, that Christianity, when

judged of as to its original by its influence over him, may well be believed to have come down from heaven, and to be in truth designed and calculated, as it was announced at its birth, to promote "glory to God, in the highest, and on earth peace, good will amongst men."

But the value of this testimony will be greatly enhanced, when the very points, in which the world is constrained most to admire the character of the Christian, are those, in which, previous to his conversion, it was most palpably defective; because such a change manifestly requires a most powerful and valuable principle to account for its production; and thus compels the most prejudiced to confess, that there must be a reality, and a blessedness in the religion, which can accomplish such a glorious change; one, to which the maxims of worldly wisdom, and the influences of mere earthly motives, are confessedly inadequate.

When the man of furious passions is seen transformed into a man of a meek and gentle spirit—when the lion is changed into the lamb—this moral miracle, when avowedly wrought by the influence of Christian principles and motives, unequivocally proclaims the presence of a divine power, as indispensable for its accomplish-

ment. Or when the proud man, who used to look down on all below him, in the grade of earthly distinction, with supercilious contempt, as if they were beings of a lower scale in creation, is seen to be clothed with humility, condescending, with unaffected and unostentatious lowliness and love, to men of low estate—when the man, who was once a degraded sensualist, glorying in his shame, is seen to shrink from the most distant allusion to what could wound the chastest ear, and bears evident testimony, by all his outward deportment, that he loves and cherishes that inward purity of heart, which is so unequivocal and distinguishing a mark of those, who shall see God—when the naturally resentful are seen to bear the most galling provocations and insults, with unruffled patience; and their every look, and word, and action incontestably prove, that there is not a spark of resentment allowed to be harboured within their breasts—when the naturally censorious are seen to take a visible delight in bearing the most favourable testimony to the excellences of all whom they know, and profess to love; and in throwing the veil of charity over all their faults—Oh! then, indeed, Christianity triumphs! Then, indeed, are the men of the world compelled to do it homage—

Then is its divine Author glorified in the eyes of those, who, though strangers to His infinite preciousness, are forced to feel, that His religion is indeed from heaven. For whatever enthusiasm may be supposed capable of effecting, it is universally acknowledged, that it is not equal to such a work as this—To purify the polluted—to soften the rough—to calm the irritable—to sweeten the bitter—to humble the proud—to make a man, in fine, the very opposite of his former self, in those qualities which were so interwoven with the whole texture of his mental constitution, as to be an essential part of himself—*this, this* is a triumph, which the Gospel can alone accomplish; and, therefore, pre-eminently, it brings, whenever displayed, abundant glory to God.

Let this consideration, believer, stir you up to the most vigilant and persevering exertions, to manifest in your character the power of the Gospel, by displaying the victory it has enabled you to achieve over your besetting sin. Keep the strictest watch over every thought or desire, which may tend to give it even a momentary triumph over you. Look back on the retrospect of your past life! Observe what circumstances have proved a snare to you, in regard to

this bosom-lust. Avoid, with almost scrupulous solicitude, whatever you have either found by experience, or have reason to fear, can have the remotest tendency to excite or to strengthen its influence. No matter how harmless, and, in one sense lawful, the very same indulgences might prove to another Christian, of a different temperament, and therefore exposed to different temptations, to you at least they are unquestionably unlawful, because injurious, since they give strength to that sin, which you are called upon, by every motive of gratitude to God your Saviour, and a desire for your own happiness, to endeavour, by all the means, and at any cost or sacrifice, within your reach, altogether to eradicate from your soul. Nor ever think, that the minutest circumstances are too trifling, to be thus made a matter of so much watchful circumspection; or that any sacrifices can be too great, to be cheerfully submitted to, for the advancement of your sanctification. Oh! they know nothing of the constitution of the human mind, or the avenues by which Satan can gain access to the human heart, who can call any thing a trifle, by which the enemy of our souls can awaken the imaginations or desires, which, from our peculiar bias, tend most to foster our beset-

ting sin, and thus to retard our progress, in running the race set before us—And that man has yet to learn the value of God's favor, and the happiness, which the smile of His love, and the sweetness of His communion can impart, who deems any sacrifice too great to make for its enjoyment, or any exercise of self-denial too minute, to secure the highest measure of that enjoyment, attainable here below!

In truth, I am deeply convinced, that there is a lamentable want, even in real Christians, of this strict and almost scrupulous self-denial, in comparatively trifling instances, which, however in themselves apparently unimportant, acquire a high degree of importance from the influence which they exercise, in promoting or retarding the work of their sanctification. A Christian, in fact, should regard nothing as a trifle, which can be influential in its bearing on this work; and there is nothing so trifling as not to be capable of being thus influential. When we consider, therefore, of what a series of important results, extending in their consequences, throughout eternity, a single thought or feeling, voluntarily cherished, may be the spring, we shall see the necessity of keeping a strict watch over the most secret workings of

our minds. We shall be jealous as to our mode of spending our most casual leisure moments; we shall ponder as to the probable results, as well as the purposes and principles, of every the minutest action of our lives; and feeling our urgent need of divinely-imparted strength, we shall fervently pray, with the Psalmist, "Let the meditations of my heart, as well as the words of my mouth, be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer!"

Now, believer, when you survey these three great enemies of your soul—the world, the flesh, and the devil—must you not, indeed, feel convinced, that you cannot contend successfully with *such* enemies, in your own strength; but must be upheld every moment by a divine arm, and should therefore pray fervently to be sustained triumphantly, in every step of the conflict, by the power of God, the Holy Ghost. And when you look back on all the way, by which your covenant-God has hitherto led you, through the wilderness, must you not feel constrained, with a thankful heart, to set up an Ebenezer to His praise, gratefully acknowledging, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped me!" And when you remember His own promise—"*I will*

never leave thee, nor forsake thee"—may you not feel assured that, as you have been hitherto, so you shall be kept by his power, through faith, unto the end? So that, blending the grateful retrospection of past deliverances with the cheerful confidence of future preservation, you may rejoicingly feel, that it is your privilege, amidst all the foes that assail, and all the perils that encompass you, to "*thank God, and take courage!*"—secure, that being conducted safely, by the guidance of the Spirit, to the land of your inheritance, and being made more than conqueror, by His Almighty arm, you shall, ere long, cast your blood-bought crown of victory, in grateful adoration, before your beloved Redeemer's throne!

CHAPTER X.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

I CANNOT but fear that there is a deficiency, in our day, even in many sincere Christians, of that deep-wrought conviction, which the child of God should abidingly cherish, of the utter incapability of deriving even the smallest degree of benefit from any means of grace, independently of the accompanying power and blessing of God, the Holy Ghost. Too many even of those, whom that Spirit has brought out of darkness into marvellous light, are, I fear, wanting in that penetrating sense of their own utter helplessness, in every subsequent step of their Christian course, which would keep them continually cleaving close to the Blessed Spirit, in the attitude of confiding trust in His promised aid, seeking to be every moment taught and guided, upheld and comforted, by Him.

This is peculiarly to be apprehended, in the present day, in the spirit in which many attend

on the ministry of some favourite preacher. How often, with such, are the luminous expositions, the pathetic appeals, the powerful arguments, the heart-stirring eloquence—ay, or even the attractions of voice, and style, and delivery, substituted, perhaps unconsciously, for the power of the Holy Spirit, as the ground, on which too many rest their hopes of a blessing from the ministrations of the ambassador of Christ! Thus they give to the poor weak instrument the glory, exclusively due to the Almighty Spirit, who can alone crown with success what we would call the most powerful, and who can, with equal ease, clothe with power what we might think the feeblest advocate of the truth, "as it is in Jesus!" How painfully is this affront to the Holy Spirit often manifested by the visible disappointment, depicted in the countenance, if not acknowledged by the lips, when the favourite preacher's place is unexpectedly supplied by a brother in the ministry, altogether as faithful, though perhaps not as eloquent or attractive, as the idol of the day. Is not the language of such complaints, in the ears of God, plainly this—"I came here for a blessing on the preached word to-day; but, *since God's message of mercy* to my soul is not to be

delivered by the voice, which sounds like sweet music in my ear, I have no hope that I can receive any profit from divine truths, if delivered by any other ambassador of Christ, not *equally talented;* and I do not believe that the Holy Spirit can or will bless God's word to my soul to-day, since it is not to be enforced by my favourite preacher's voice."

I am well aware, that no individual, who believes in the essential Deity of the Holy Spirit, would deliberately offer Him such an affront, by adopting language so insulting to His divine majesty. But would it not be well for many, who over value the talents or other engaging qualities of some particular preacher, to consider seriously, whether this is not the language of their hearts, (which the heart-searching God always is listening to, and regards as altogether more expressive of the real sentiments of every individual than the language of the lips;) and whether they ought not to shrink from even appearing to offer such an insult to the Blessed Spirit, by seeming to doubt, that He can bless His own word, when preached by a faithful minister, even though it be not accompanied with certain attractive qualifications in the worm of the dust, whose instrumentality the Spirit

vouchsafes to employ, in the work of calling sinners into the Saviour's fold, and building up believers in their most holy faith!

If, then, you heartily desire to derive profit to your soul from your attendance on the ministry of the word—if this be *really* your object in going to the house of God—(and to go with any other object in view, such as the mere gratification of intellectual taste, or to be delighted with the display of human eloquence, is to affront most grievously that God, whose "*house of prayer*" is profaned by such a desecration of its hallowed services,) go, believer, in the full confidence, that *let who will* deliver God's message to your soul, it is *only* the Holy Spirit that can bring it with power to your heart—That if St. Paul himself were to return to earth, or the angel Gabriel were to descend from heaven, to proclaim to you the message of redeeming love, or to enforce the holy precepts of the Gospel of salvation, *even their* ministry would be really profitable, *only so far as* it was made so by the accompanying power and blessing of the Spirit—And that that same Spirit could make the ministrations of the weakest servant of the Saviour as efficacious, in conveying spiritual strength, joy, and consolation to your soul, as

those of the chief of the apostles, or the loftiest of the seraphim around the throne of God!

I have dwelt, the more fully, on this particular exemplification of that forgetfulness of the necessity of habitual dependence on the Holy Spirit, to which I have alluded, as tending so much to retard the spiritual progress of many even sincere Christians, both because I fear it is very extensively prevalent in our day; and because it serves to illustrate that defect, in the spiritual system of many religious professors, to which is mainly, I conceive, to be attributed the anomalous exhibition which they display. How many do we see, most punctual in their attendance on a faithful Gospel ministry, and, as far as we can judge, sincerely desirous to profit by it. Yea! and still further, most regular in their attendance on that means of grace, which is so pre-eminently calculated to promote the believer's progress in holiness—the sacramental table—even where the Redeemer's dying love is commemorated every returning Sabbath; who yet do not exhibit, after years of such attendance, any perceptible marks of growth in grace, of increased spirituality, or heavenly-mindedness; of closer conformity to the Saviour's character; or more unreserved consecration of every

talent, energy, and affection, to the advancement of His cause. If they have not visibly retrograded, at least they have not visibly advanced, in their Christian course. There appears to be the same want of uncompromising decision of purpose, of unbending firmness of principle, and unreserved devotedness of life! The same temporizing efforts to reconcile, what God Himself has declared to be irreconcilable, His service, and that of the world. The same palpable inconsistencies of conduct, and irregularities of temper, which were so painfully perceptible in the commencement of their career. Why is this? We cannot doubt that one prominent reason is, that the influences of the Holy Spirit have not been humbly confided in, earnestly sought, and carefully cherished. There has been a neglect of looking up to Him in faith, and calling upon Him in prayer, to bless the attendance on those faithful ministrations. The sanctuary has been visited—the preacher has been admired—the sacramental table has been frequented—but the Holy Spirit has not been implored, with the fervour, the importunity, the perseverance in supplication, befitting one who *felt*, in the deepest conviction of his soul, that without the blessing of that Spirit, all

this attendance, were it even on the most powerful ministry that ever the church of Christ enjoyed, would—yea! must be utterly unavailing for that strengthening and refreshing of the soul, which only the Holy Spirit can impart, by conveying *His* influences through these divinely-appointed channels for the communication of His grace.

Let us hear, on this subject, the recorded experience of one, whose sentiments should be received with the most affectionate and respectful attention; and whose character, as developed in those published "Letters," which breathe such a sweet spirit of Christian humility, holiness, and love, cannot fail to win our most cordial veneration and esteem—need I say, that I mean the faithful, zealous, heavenly-minded Venn. (Life, pp. 90, 420.)

"I find, with regard to myself, that the benefit of prayers, sacraments, and the means of grace, bears exact proportion to the care I take, to implore the influence and operation of the Spirit in them; that when I am only a little concerned in asking of the Lord the inestimable comfort of His help, my spiritual duties afford me little comfort in the exercise, and leave no lasting impressions. On the contrary, when I

am importunate with the Lord to put life and power in the ordinances, and to make me feel some correspondent affections, I am enabled to say—'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.' Oh! that the Spirit of grace and supplication may be poured out upon us! I am more and more convinced, that all the difference between those who bring forth no fruit, and those who do, depends upon the different manner in which they hear, and read, and pray."

I. Cherish this conviction, believer, habitually and influentially, and let it constrain you to the most earnest prayers for the outpouring of the Spirit, in all the plenitude of His most precious gifts and graces, on your soul! Are you then about to engage in prayer?[1] Call to remembrance that most precious declaration of the apostle (Rom. viii. 26, 27.)—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered; and

[1] May I be permitted to refer to a little work, entitled "Meditations and Addresses, chiefly on the subject of Prayer," in which I have expressed my sentiments more fully, on a point, so vitally connected with the believer's progress in the divine life.

He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God!" Ever remember, that it is the Holy Spirit alone, who can teach you, both what to pray for, and how to pray—give to your sluggish affections and desires wings of flame, with which to mount up heavenward—and fix your wandering thoughts on the majesty and love of the Being, whom you are going to address—the magnitude and preciousness of the blessings, for which you are about to supplicate—and the glory and grace of the channel, through which you have an humble confidence of acceptance, both for yourself, and your supplications—even the divine Saviour and Intercessor of sinners, whom the Father always delighteth to hear. And oh! with *such* an Advocate to plead on your behalf, may you not indeed "come boldly to the throne of grace!"

Look up then for this Spirit's teaching and influences, whenever you are engaged in communion with your Father in heaven. After you have laid the wood in order for the sacrifice, implore of Him to send down the fire from above, which can alone cause the incense of the offering of prayer and praise, to ascend accept-

ably to the throne of God, perfumed with the fragrance of the Redeemer's all-sufficient merits, and all-prevailing mediation! Remember, if you would preserve your devotions from degenerating into a mechanical routine of heartless formality, you must unceasingly confide in the almighty energy of that divine Spirit, who first kindled in your heart the spark of devotional feeling—who has since sustained and cherished it by His divine breath—and who can alone keep it from expiring, by continual supplies of His grace, so as to fan the often almost dying spark into a brightening flame! Oh! if you always engaged in the devotional exercises and enjoyments of the closet, in *such* a frame of mind, thus earnestly desirous of heart-communion with God, and thus implicitly trusting in the Holy Spirit for power to lift up your heart on high, and pour it out into a Father's ears!—what sweet, what heaven-foretasting happiness would you enjoy, in devout intercourse with the God of your salvation—and what a channel of the richest blessings would prayer then become!

Then indeed might you hope, that the Holy Spirit, in answer to *such* prayers, would shed His sanctifying influences in rich abundance on

your soul, and thus advance, with rapid progress, your assimilation to the divine character —your meetness for the enjoyment of the divine presence!

II.—Again—are you about to be engaged in the perusal of the Word of God? Lift up your heart and voice to the Holy Spirit, in the words of the Psalmist, "Open Thou mine eyes, to see the wondrous things, contained in this blessed Book." Have the impression deeply wrought into your inmost soul, that, without the divine teaching of this blessed Spirit, you cannot so understand a single verse, as to derive from it spiritual strength, refreshment, or consolation. That you cannot appropriate a single promise, with such a grasp, as will fill your heart with peace and joy, and enable it to abound in hope, unless by the power of the Holy Ghost! Yes, believer, the Bible, even to you, must prove a sealed book, unless the Holy Spirit break the seals, and give you the true interpretation, of the glorious visions it unfolds to the spiritually-enlightened eye. If your object, in studying the Word of God, be only to become a fluent talker, or an able controversialist, or even a skilful expounder of the sacred Volume, you may, to a great extent at

least, accomplish all this by the exercise of your own mental faculties and reasoning powers, without any *peculiar* illumination, or *special* influence, emanating from the Eternal Spirit. But if your object be, to grow in grace, to advance in holiness, to acquire increased likeness to the Saviour's image, and meetness for His presence, then must the Spirit enlighten your understanding, and impress your heart, while you are employed in reading God's holy Word—and you must be fervent in prayer for His enlightening and sanctifying operation, under a deep conviction, that it is *only* when His voice says—"Let there be light," that there is light, beaming from the sacred page, and, like the sunshine of heaven, brightening, warming, and gladdening wherever its blessed beams descend.

But while I consider this reliance on the Spirit's teaching and influences as of *primary* importance, in the perusal of the sacred volume, there are one or two hints I would affectionately suggest, which you may find profitable, in assisting your anxious endeavours, to make the study of its precious pages conducive to the advancement of your sanctification. Read the Bible with *fixed attention*, concentra-

ting all the faculties of your mind on the work, in which you are engaged. With *deep reverence*, regarding it as the Word of God, as much as if the voice of God were, at the moment, audibly to pronounce in your ears the very words you are reading.—And with a sincere desire to discover the mind of the Spirit, remembering that all Scripture is given by inspiration of the Spirit, and that the holy men, who have recorded therein the revealed will of God, "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Two or three verses, read in such a frame of mind, would be more profitable than as many chapters, hurried over in that superficial manner, in which too many, who engage in it, only to satisfy conscience by the long-established custom of daily reading a certain portion of Scripture, peruse the sacred page. The Bible is a mine of spiritual wealth; but we must dig deep, if we would discover the rich veins of precious ore, which lie hidden beneath its surface. If we are content carelessly to skim its surface, we shall come away unenriched by a single particle of the divine treasure it contains.

Again—read in a spirit of self-application—Approach the sacred volume, that you may

hear what the Lord God has to *say to you*—Remember the address of the Bible is to you individually, "I have a message from God unto *thee*;" and let the answer of your soul be, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth!" Is it a precept, that comes before you? Examine, whether you are in the habit of rendering it a cordial obedience! Is it a prohibition? Inquire, if you habitually abstain, through a conscientious regard to the will of the God you love, from the forbidden thing, whatever it may be! Does some precious promise meet your eye? See, that your are enabled to appropriate it as your own, and to extract from it the sweetness of divine comfort, or the spirit of sustaining strength, it was intended to supply. Does some awful threatening arrest your attention? Take good heed, that it serves to kindle in your soul a holy, filial fear of your covenant-God, and makes you shrink from the most distant approach to what would provoke His righteous displeasure, and force Him to hide from you the smile of His love. Is the character of the Saviour passing before your view? Most carefully examine yourself, whether you have indeed put on the Lord Jesus Christ—whether the features of your character are visibly modelled

after His. Ask yourself, Is *this* the temper I habitually display? Is *this* the spirit I manifest, in the daily duties of life, and the social intercourse of the domestic circle? Am I walking, even as he walked—closely treading in the blessed steps of His most holy life?

Or is it some doctrinal truth, that you are employed in reading? Ask yourself—do I *cordially* believe this? Does it exercise its legitimate influence over my affections, my will, my daily walk before God and man? May I hope that I have received it in the spirit, and am using it for the purposes, which my covenant God designed, in revealing it to my soul? Or is it some bright glimpse of the promised glory, reserved for you in heaven, that sheds a halo of celestial splendour round the sacred page? Oh! ask yourself seriously, and as in the sight of a heart-searching God, am I growing in meetness for *such* a heaven as this; and is my gratitude deepening in my heart, and exhibited more consistently in my life, towards *Him*, who has purchased that heaven for me with His own most precious blood! Believe me, the smallest portion of the Word of God, read in *such* a spirit of self-application, will conduce more to your progress in holiness, than

chapter after chapter, read in a careless spirit; or applying to others the precious truths, designed to strengthen, sanctify, and comfort your own soul.

Finally, read in a practical spirit—sincerely resolved, by divine grace, cheerfully to obey *every* injunction, which the voice of God, speaking in His word, sounds in your ears. Let the inquiry of your soul, on consulting the Sacred Oracles, always be "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to *do?*" Remember the words of the apostle, (Phil. iv. 9.) "those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me *do*,—and the God of peace shall be with you!" Remember the words of a greater than the greatest of the apostles (St. John, xiii. 17.) If ye *know* these things, *happy* are ye, if ye *do* them. "Ye are my friends, if ye *do* whatsoever I command you." (St. John, xv. 14.) Implying, irresistibly, the all-important consideration, that the knowledge of saving truth can only conduce to our happiness, and evidence that we enjoy the Saviour's friendship, when it issues in practical results, in our doing, from a principle of loyal allegiance, and grateful love, the will of our Father in heaven.

See, then, that the object you keep constantly

in view, in your study of the Word of God, is, that the Holy Spirit may enable you in such a manner to apprehend and cherish its precious truths, that they may be instrumental in so conforming your character to that of your Divine Master, even of Him, who was "God manifest in the flesh," as to capacitate you for loving, delighting in, and glorifying Him on earth, and in heaven; in time, and throughout eternity.[1]

III. In your attendance on the sanctuary, I would once more affectionately suggest to you

[1] In addition to the well-known and universally esteemed Commentaries of Scott, Henry, and Doddridge, I would earnestly recommend to all, who desire the most valuable human aid in the study of the Scriptures, an "Explanatory and Practical Commentary on the New Testament—revised by the Rev. W. Dalton of Wolverhampton," which has been recently published. It combines the clearest and fullest exhibition of evangelical truth with the most faithful and impressive practical exhortation—and sets forth, with equal fidelity and force, the necessity of a simple reliance on the "righteousness of God our Saviour" for acceptance, and of the sanctifying influences of God, the Holy Ghost, for meetness for heaven. Its style, while sufficiently elegant to please the cultivated taste, is sufficiently simple to reach the humblest understanding. The appeals to the conscience of the reader are peculiarly affectionate and solemn—the statements on prophetical points are characterized by remarkable moderation, and sobriety, and uniformly tend to edification—and altogether, it seems to me, in all respects, most admirably adapted for family worship, as well as for private meditation.

the importance of going to the House of God, with a firm persuasion on your mind, that whatever spiritual refreshment you hope to receive, through the channel of its hallowed services, must emanate from the divine fountain of all grace, the Holy Spirit. Be earnest therefore in prayer, before you go, that His blessing may abundantly rest on the services of the sanctuary.

Remember the promise of the God of ordinances is, "*My Word* shall not return to Me void, but shall accomplish that whereunto I send it." Observe—"*My* Word," not if delivered with certain accompaniments of talent, or style, or manner, but simply, My Word! Yes, *because* it is the Word of God, therefore it *shall* accomplish that whereunto He sends it; and to deny this *virtually*, by *only* expecting a blessing, where that word is powerfully or eloquently enforced, is, (as we have already shewn,) to attribute to human instrumentality what is due exclusively to divine power—is to ascribe to a worm of the dust the prerogative of God, the Holy Ghost—is to rob Jehovah, the Spirit, of His glory—and thus to provoke Him to withhold altogether those influences, which could alone, as we before remarked, impart efficacy

to the preaching of an apostle, or an angel, or even of the blessed Saviour Himself.

In addition to this suggestion, I would also observe, that, in the present day, I doubt not that the blessing, which might be expected to rest on the faithful preaching of the Gospel, is often hindered with many who attend the sanctuary, by their disrespectful treatment of the other parts of the service, appointed for God's House. The solemn declaration of Jehovah appears to be forgotten: "My House shall be called a House of *prayer* to all nations."

Too many seem to regard the House of God as prominently, if not exclusively, a house of preaching, instead of a house of prayer.

If we may judge by outward and visible signs of what is passing in the inward recesses of the heart, one cannot but frequently remark a most painful contrast between the feelings, with which the prayers and the preaching are regarded; the former *endured*; the latter *enjoyed*; the prayers *listened* to, (often we fear, not even joined in with the lips, much less the heart,) with manifest weariness, as a something tiresome, that must be submitted to, for the sake of the anticipated enjoyment, which the preaching is expected to yield, and, from this expectation, is listened to with manifest delight.

Now can you hope, that after offering such a monstrous insult to the Majesty of God—after having told Him to His face, that you looked on communion with Him, in prayer, and praise, as a wearisome occupation, from which you would gladly escape if you could, and which you only endure, because you cannot, without it, enjoy the feast you look forward to in the preaching of His minister—can you hope that He will look on you with a smile of complacent love; and impart to your soul that blessing from His Spirit, without which you would listen to an angel's eloquence utterly in vain, as to any spiritual benefit which it could be a means of conferring.

Besides, reflect, is it reasonable to expect, that any thing which the preacher can bring forward will be profitably received, when your mind is in *such* a frame, as to treat the worship of the blessed God with palpable disrespect? If, therefore, you would desire to derive spiritual benefit from attendance on the services of the sanctuary, and to find them instrumental in advancing your sanctification, take good heed that you do not yourself put an insuperable impediment in your own way, by offering such an affront to God, in the very commencement of

the service, as must constrain Him, in manifestation of His righteous displeasure, as a jealous God, to withhold from you the communications of His grace, and thus to bring on the most fruitful ordinances a withering blight. If you do, although, to those who have enjoyed devout communion with God in the previous parts of the service, they may supply abundant measures of spiritual strength, and refreshment, they will prove to you "wells without water;" and however amused or gratified your intellectual tastes may have been, during the delivery of the preacher's expositions and appeals, you will return home as altogether unbenefitted, in a spiritual point of view, as if you had been attending an exhibition of forensic eloquence, or theatrical display.[1] Be assured, the best pre-

[1] How striking, on this subject, the testimony of Mr. Venn, (Life, pp. 404, 540.) "Prayer is much wanted here. I see the people greatly inattentive to the worship, and yet hearing with seeming earnestness! *This will never do!* Worship in spirit and in truth must mellow the heart, and dispose it to hear with humility, and desire to profit—otherwise God's Spirit is grieved, and withdraws! *The preacher may be praised, but the soul will not be profited!* You must beware of a fatal error, common among those who love to hear the Gospel. Assured, from the oracles of God, that preaching the Gospel is the appointed means to convert sinners, not a few shamefully disparage public worship—as if *all good* to the soul was to come through the

parative for listening to the preacher with profit, is to have previously communed with God, through the medium of the services of the Church, in a devout and thankful spirit. If, in the penitential confessions, your *heart* has poured out before Him the contrite feelings of godly sorrow for sin—if, in the supplications for spiritual mercies, your soul has breathed forth its fervent desires, (as really valuing and thirsting after the blessings for which you plead,) with

speaker; none from calling with one heart and voice, upon the name of the Lord, in His own house! Hence, while both minister and people should be abased before God, in confession of their vileness—should be pleading, in the full assurance of faith, the sacrifice and intercession of Christ for pardon—should be earnestly imploring more grace, to serve the Lord, to all well-pleasing—should, with flaming love to all mankind, be recommending them to the tender care of our heavenly Father; and be filled with joy, in returning ardent thanks for the loving-kindness of God towards themselves and all men—whilst this grand business should fill their souls, a total inattention is visible in many countenances! Their entertainment seems only to begin, when the preacher has taken his text! Gross ignorance! Impious indecency! Professed believers, can you imagine you shall ever receive profit in *one* means of grace, while you pour contempt on *another?* Or that, after passing through the time of divine worship, without any exercise of repentance, love, and devotion, you can be in a fit disposition, to attend to the things which shall be delivered from the pulpit!" Indeed the entire of the letter, from which the above extract is given, is peculiarly deserving of the most attentive perusal, by all who desire to advance in the divine life!

mingled humility and confidence, arising from the remembrance at once of your own unworthiness, and the infinite worthiness of Him, for whose sake you implore those mercies—and if, in the ascription of praise and thanksgiving for blessings received, you have, like the psalmist, charged it on your soul to bless the Lord, and on all that is within you to bless His holy name, so that while your lips spake or sang His praise, you were, at the same time, "making melody in your heart unto the Lord;" then, indeed, may you listen to the word preached with an *humble assurance* of reaping a rich harvest of spiritual good, because you may then reckon securely on the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit, to accompany His own Word, and to bring it home, in all its invigorating, purifying, and gladdening influences, with power to your heart.

Ever remember also, that the manner in which you spend your *entire* Sabbath, not merely the *portion* of it which you pass in the sanctuary, will exercise a most important influence, in promoting or retarding the progress of your sanctification. A fact, of whose truth you may feel fully assured, both from the testimony of the Word of God, and the experience of the children of God, in every age, who have always

found that the manner, in which they have spent the Sabbath-day, has most materially affected their spiritual welfare throughout the ensuing week—I will not therefore say to *you*—beware of profaning this holy day by unhallowed amusements, or wasting it in unprofitable visits. I will not suppose a child of God can be guilty of such glaring inconsistency. But you must not be content with merely negative attainments, with merely abstaining from what is obviously unsuitable to this sacred day! You must have a higher aim. You must seek to be in the Spirit, on the Lord's day—to be much on the mount of holy meditation, so that your Sabbaths may be transfiguration days. You must seek to have your chamber (for I assume you will be much there,) a kind of Patmos, where, in the solitude of devout retirement, and sweet communion with your covenant God, bright visions of celestial glory will be unveiled to your view! You must remember to keep the Sabbath-*day holy!* to have the stamp of holiness inscribed on all your conversation, and reading, and pursuits, throughout the day! You must try the lawfulness of whatever you are engaged in by *this* test—Does it tend to promote the object, for which the God of the

Sabbath appointed this day to be hallowed to Himself? Does it tend to wean you more from the world, to draw you closer to Christ, to deepen your gratitude for His love and your zeal for His glory—to advance both your desire and your meetness for the sabbath of the skies? For it should be your heartfelt wish, and earnest endeavour, that each successive sabbath may find you, and all that are dearest to you, rapidly ripening for the exalted enjoyments of the heavenly sabbath; prepared, with deepened humility, and self-renunciation, with hearts more overflowing with grateful love to the God of your salvation, and spirits more attuned to high and holy pleasures and pursuits, to join in the worship of the celestial sanctuary, and to take part in the chorus of thanksgiving, which shall be lifted up before the throne of God, and of the Lamb, by angels and archangels, and all the company of the redeemed, throughout the endless ages of heaven's blissful sabbath of everlasting praise.

Nor must I omit to mention two important helps, which, if prayerfully employed, in the spirit of entire dependence on the promised blessing of the Holy Ghost, will greatly accelerate your progress in running your heavenward

race—I mean "Meditation and Conversation" on the things belonging to your eternal peace!

IV. I cannot but fear that the former of these is deplorably neglected, and the latter as deplorably abused, in the present day, by many who appear to be sincere in their profession of attachment to the Saviour's name and cause! And thus by the neglect or abuse of the very means, which, when diligently and devoutly employed, would conduce so abundantly to the furtherance of their sanctification, their progress in the Christian life is by no means as decided or as rapid as it might, and ought to be.

We live in an age of extraordinary excitement on religious subjects. There is an immense increase of attendance on religious ordinances, and reading of religious books, and discussion of religious topics; but I fear there is by no means a proportionable increase of religious *meditation*, in the retirement of the closet, accompanied by fervent prayer, that the dews of divine grace may there silently descend on the soul, and hallow the hour of secret communion with the heart, and the heart-searching God!

Nor can I hesitate to attribute, in a great measure, to this cause, the painfully palpable fact, that there is such a lamentable dispropor-

tion between the spread of religious profession and phraseology on the one hand, and religious principle and practice on the other.

It is not the number of lectures we attend, or books we read, even if the lectures be the most evangelical, and the books the most scriptural, that could be chosen, which will, of itself, promote our growth in grace. It is only that portion of either, which, by secret meditation and prayer, is so inwardly digested, as to conduce to the nourishment of our souls, and the strengthening of our spiritual life! Meditation is the digestive faculty of the soul, and it is only by its means, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that what we hear or read is turned into spiritual nutriment, and thus tends to make us stronger and healthier Christians, growing up to the full measure of the stature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our closets should be as hives, where all the stores of religious knowledge, that we have gathered in our excursions abroad, are wrought by the heaven-taught skill of holy meditation, into spiritual food, at once sweet to the taste and refreshing to the soul. Did the bee only wander from flower to flower, and gather the most abundant materials for the construction of the honey-comb, but not employ

them for this purpose by skilful labour in the hive, of what advantage would all her collected treasures prove? Alas! in the religious world, in our day, there are too many who act such a foolish part—always on the wing, appearing to be continually collecting materials for making spiritual food, but never employed at home, in the quiet retirement of the closet, in the work of devout meditation, by which alone the spiritual sweetness can be extracted from the plentiful stores they have gathered while abroad.

Would you, then, believer, desire to be a growing Christian? getting every day stronger in the Lord; holier, and therefore happier; more conformed to Christ, and more meet for heaven? I do not say, read less, or hear less; but I do say, *meditate more*. I would *not* wish you to be seldomer at the lecture, *but* to be much oftener in your closet! Do not converse less with books, but oh! do, I affectionately advise you, commune more with your own heart.

Meditate on what you have heard or read, till it becomes, as it were, incorporated with the whole system of your thoughts and feelings, and, through the divine influence of the Holy Spirit, exercises a sanctifying energy over your heart and life.

Have special seasons set apart for the sacred work; and, as far as possible, let no interruptions hinder you from its performance; and when you have once engaged in it, do not leave it off, till the Holy Spirit has given you such a realizing view, and lively perception of the precious truths which your mind is engaged in contemplating, that you will be conscious to yourself, and all around you will be constrained to take notice of the hallowed influence that has emanated from them, giving a heavenly cast to your character and conversation.

In selecting the most suitable subjects for meditation, choose principally those grander and more glorious parts of the divine revelation, which are calculated most powerfully to draw up your affections to high, and holy, and heavenly themes, and mould your character into a conformity with that of the Son of God. Dwell especially on the distinguishing offices of each Divine Person of the adorable Trinity—the peculiar love manifested towards you by each—the love of the Father, in choosing you from eternity, and giving His own Son, as a propitiation for your sins—the love of the Son, in giving Himself for you to death, even the death of the cross—and the love of the Holy Ghost, in

taking up His abode in your heart, to purify it by His divine power, and make you meet for an inheritance among the saints in light! Meditate much on the history of the Saviour's redeeming love, and mysterious suffering, from His manger to His cross, with the reflection accompanying you, in every step of that wondrous history—*All this love* lavished on *me!* all this suffering endured for *me!* And surely, while thus musing, the fire of grateful love will be kindled in your heart; and the song of thanksgiving and praise burst from your lips.

Meditate, also, with frequent and sweet meditation, on the Saviour's character—on its every lovely feature—with fervent prayer, that they may all be distinctly reflected in your own—On His first coming, in great humiliation, to be wounded and bruised, scorned and scourged, condemned and crucified, for your sake. And oh! meditate with deep and devout attention on His second coming, that promised day of His glorious manifestation, when He shall appear, and all His saints shall appear with Him in glory! And make it the subject of special supplication, that you may be enabled to look forward to *that* day, with continually increasing ardour of holy desire and delight; and

to be always waiting in such an occupation of time, and such a frame of mind, as you would wish to be found in by the Son of Man, at His coming; that were He suddenly to appear, you might be found ready, with your lamp burning, and your loins girded, and your whole soul in the attitude of constant preparedness, and eager expectation, looking and longing for the arrival of the God you love, that so you may fully understand by experience the glorious meaning of those wonderful words—" Blessed is that servant, whom the Master, when He cometh, shall find watching! Yea! I say unto you, He will make that servant ruler over all that He hath!" Oh! what a meetness for the day of His manifestation, and the glory and bliss His people shall then inherit, would *such* meditation impart!

V. The other help, to which I have adverted, as calculated to assist you in your spiritual career, is religious conversation. But, with regard to this, much caution is required in the present day, lest a counterfeit should pass current, which, so far from promoting, would unquestionably retard your progress in the divine life.

I would observe, then, that we cannot dignify with the title of religious conversation

much of what has usurped its name, in what is called the religious world.

We cannot bestow this title on the irreverent discussion of the sublime mysteries of our holy faith, canvassed in a spirit, as utterly unmarked by devout feeling, as if the topic discussed were some common-place subject of an earthly character, instead of those things, into which angels themselves desire to look with devout contemplation, and of which we may feel convinced even they would not speak without reverential awe! Nor can we give this title to the angry disputation about deep and difficult points of controversy, on non-essential parts of the divine dispensation—I mean such as do not vitally affect either the Saviour's essential glory, or the foundation, on which the hopes of the sinner exclusively should rest—for such disputation, conducted in such a spirit, can only ruffle the temper, and irritate the feelings of the disputants; and this assuredly can in no wise tend to promote their spiritual welfare, or advance their meetness for the kingdom of unmingled and uninterrupted harmony, peace, and love! Nor can we award the title of religious conversation to the critical disquisition, (so very prevalent in our day,) of the comparative merits of different

preachers; or that kind of spiritual gossiping, which prattles about the religious concerns of others, with precisely the same feelings of unwarrantable curiosity, and heartless indifference, with which the people of the world canvass the characters and concerns of those, who form the subject of their conversational coteries. And, least of all, can we give the title to that censorious and uncharitable commenting on the failings and faults of the absent, which is said, I fear with too much truth, to characterise many of the religious professors of our day; for I am convinced there can be nothing more directly at variance with the spirit of the Gospel, more hateful to its Divine Author, or more prejudicial to those engaged in it, than such conversation as this! It cannot possibly consist with the spirit of humility, and Christian love, reigning in the speaker's heart: it nourishes only spiritual pride, and every unkind and unamiable feeling, in all who take part in it with pleasure: it is diametrically opposed, both to the precepts and example of Him, who was the embodied manifestation of divine love, and on whose lips the law of kindness perpetually dwelt! and it is directly calculated to unfit all who can cordially enjoy it, for the society and enjoyments

of that heaven, whose very atmosphere, and the essential element of its felicity, is love!

By religious conversation then, I do not mean any these of things! No,—I mean such, and such *alone*, as tends to draw those, who engage in it, closer to a Saviour-God; to give them a deeper sense of His infinite preciousness; to assimilate them more entirely to His divine character: and to stimulate them more zealously to every work and labour of love, for the advancement of His glory!

Always then try what is called your religious conversation by such tests as these. Does it make the Saviour more precious to you? Does it deepen your gratitude to Him for all He *has* done, and your confidence in Him for all He has *promised* to do, for you, both in time and for eternity.

Does it increase your love for all who bear His image; and your meetness for the inheritance, which He has purchased for His people with His own blood? Does it exhibit, more attractively, the divine loveliness of His character, and make you thirst, with more ardent desire, for perfect conformity to all its heavenly features? Does it stir you up to more affectionate zeal, and more energetic efforts, by the

consecration of all your time and talents, to advance His glory? Does it teach you to look back with more gratitude on His first, and to look forward with more delight to His second coming?

Whatever will not stand the test of such questions as these, is not what Scripture would call religious conversation—is not what the Apostle would designate—"Speech seasoned with salt—for the use of edifying, to minister grace to the hearers." But oh! if all, who really love the Lord, would thus converse together when they meet, how would they assist each other, in running the heavenward race! How would they become as ministering spirits to each other! How would such converse sweeten the society of Christian friends, and be indeed worthy of being called the "Communion of Saints," serving, as it so powerfully would do, to quicken each other in zeal, and devotedness to the Saviour's service, and to fan in each other's hearts the sparks of love to Him into a brighter and a warmer flame.

Hear the expostulation and advice of one, who indeed habitually had his "conversation in heaven!" for if ever, in these later days, the primitive standard of scriptural piety, in medi-

tation and converse, has been reached, it was by Leighton—"And thus with respect to Christians conversing with each other in their mutual exhortings and comfortings, all is cold and dead that flows not from some inward persuasion and experimental knowledge of divine things. But that gives an edge and a sweetness to Christian conference to be speaking of Jesus Christ, not only as a King and as a Redeemer, but as *their* King and *their* Redeemer, in David's style—'My King and my God'—and of His sufferings, as theirs, applied by faith, and acquitting them in St. Paul's style—'who loved me, and gave Himself for me'—to be speaking of the glory to come as their inheritance, that of which they are partakers, their home; as strangers meeting together abroad, in some foreign country, delight to speak of their own land, their parentage, and friends, and the rich patrimony there abiding them. And this ought to be the entertainment of Christians when they meet. Away with trifling vain discourses. Cause all to give place to these refreshing remembrances of our home! Were our hearts much on that rich inheritance above, it would be impossible to refrain our tongues, and to pass on so silent concerning it—to find matter of empty pratings

and be pleased with them, and to have no relish of this! Whither go your hearts? They are out of their way and abase themselves, that turn so much downwards, and are not more above the sun, eyeing still that blessed land, where our purchased inheritance lies! Oh! the brightness of that glory, when it shall be revealed! How shall they be astonished, who shall see it, and not partake of it! How shall they be filled with everlasting joy, who are heirs of it! Were the heart much upon the thoughts of that glory, what thing is there in this perishing world, which could either lift it up, or cast it down?"

If then, believer, you desire to derive from Christian intercourse the measure of spiritual refreshment and strength, which your Divine Master graciously designed the communion of His people to produce, take good heed, whenever you meet, to converse together chiefly of Him, in whom all your common hopes and joys are centered, and all your hearts unite, and are blended into one.

Yes, let the precious Saviour Himself be your favorite theme! His love—His work—His offices—His character!—the blessedness of living for Him now—the yet fuller blessed-

ness of living with Him hereafter! He will listen to such conversation well-pleased—He will record it, in the book of remembrance, which He keeps before Him for those who love His name! Yea, He will Himself join you, in Spirit, even as He joined Himself to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and make your heart indeed burn within you, with such glowing love to Himself, and such transporting hopes of the happiness you shall enjoy, when you shall see Him, as He is, and speak with Him, face to face, that, like Peter on the mount, you will be constrained to cry out—"It is good for us to be here;" or, like Jacob, at Bethel, "This is no other than the gate of heaven!"

Yes, *such* conversation will at once give you a foretaste of, and a meetness for, the enjoyment of the society, which shall be gathered together on Mount Sion—even an innumerable company of angels, and all the redeemed of the Lord. It will bring down, as it were, heaven to earth, and prepare you for taking your flight from earth to heaven.

While thus speaking together of the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall find His own promise sweetly fulfilled,—"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in

the midst of them!" And you shall thus be led to look more constantly, and to long more ardently, and to be prepared more fully, for the day of His manifestation, when, with all His ransomed and glorified saints, you shall encircle His throne with songs of grateful praise; and together with them enjoy, in communion with Him, and in His presence, *such* bliss, as the happiest hours of communion with Himself in secret prayer, or with His people in sweet converse, here below, can but very faintly indeed enable you to conceive.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ANOTHER most powerful means of promoting your sanctification, to which we have as yet only incidentally adverted, is frequent attendance at the sacramental table; and I cannot but feel persuaded, that were this divine ordinance uniformly approached by the children of God, in a suitable frame of mind, combining a careful watchfulness against every thing which could tend to prevent its intended benefits from being fully enjoyed, with a simple reliance on that Blessed Spirit, who can alone make it a channel for the communication of strengthening and refreshing grace, it would be found to be not only a medium for the enjoyment of the sweetest communion with a Saviour-God, but also for the impartation of the richest supplies of the Holy Spirit's invigorating, purifying, and comforting influences.

It is not, perhaps, sufficiently regarded in this

light by many even of those, who, described in the beautiful language of our Scriptural Church, "as truly and earnestly repenting of their sins, having a lively faith in God's mercy, through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, walking in God's holy will and commandments, and being in love and charity with all men,"—are privileged to draw near with faith, and to take this holy sacrament to their comfort.

Too often, I fear, even they do not sufficiently view the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as a feast which His love has prepared, consisting of the most precious food, which heaven itself could supply; for there divine food is provided for the assembled guests, who come, having on the wedding garment, wrought and furnished by the Master of the feast, even the seamless robe of His own righteousness! Yes! there the body and blood of Christ are, verily, and indeed, taken and received by the *faithful* in that supper. There *they* spiritually feed on Christ Himself, in their hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving—there *they* spiritually drink of His most precious blood. There the Holy Spirit pours into their souls the most copious streams of His reviving grace. There, as their bodies are

strengthened and refreshed by the bread and wine, even so are their souls by the communion of that blessed body and blood, of which the appointed symbols are such significant emblems. Yes! we feel persuaded, there is a most beautiful significancy and appropriateness in the emblematic memorials, which our blessed Lord has selected for the commemoration of His dying love. And, independently of many other important purposes, which they are peculiarly fitted to subserve, we cannot reasonably doubt, that a prominent lesson which they were designed to teach, is, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper should be contemplated by His own people, as pre-eminently a means of strengthening and refreshing their souls with such spiritual meat and drink, as shall invigorate them for all the conflicts and duties, and cheer them amidst all the trials and sorrows, of their Christian walk and warfare.

Bread and wine! what could more happily suggest the idea of spiritual food and spiritual cordials, nourishing and exhilarating the believer's soul. How fully do these emblems warrant the expectation, that every child of God should feel stronger in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and happier in the Lord,

rejoicing more abundantly in the joy of the Holy Ghost, after every successive attendance at the table of the Lord!

We do not forget—far from it—how pathetically eloquent these emblems are of the sufferings of the adorable Redeemer, which He so cheerfully endured, in the exceeding greatness of His love for us sinners, when "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." We gratefully would remember, how affectingly the broken bread reminds us of His body broken; and the poured out wine, of His blood poured out for the remission of our sins. We would also willingly admit, how sweetly typical these emblems are of the communion of saints, and their union, their oneness with Christ, and with each other in Christ, suggested by the consideration, that as the several particles of the bread are incorporated into one loaf, and the several drops of wine are mingled together into one cup, even so the several members of Christ's mystical body are incorporated together in Him, making but one body, animated by one Spirit! All this we would acknowledge to be most beautifully shadowed out by the sacred emblems of the body and blood of Christ, in the Lord's Supper. Nor would we overlook what

an awfully significant intimation the selection of these emblems supplies of the uselessness of partaking of *outward* ordinances, unaccompanied by an *inward* principle of living faith, and the necessity of personally embracing the offers of salvation. For as bread and wine cannot strengthen or refresh a corpse, so neither can the outward participation of the sacrament impart spiritual strength or refreshment to a soul spiritually dead—yea, a sinner in such a condition, can only, by receiving unworthily, eat and drink condemnation to himself—so that spiritual life must be imparted to the soul, before it can be spiritually strengthened or refreshed by the Lord's Supper. And, further, as bread and wine, however nutritive or reviving in themselves, cannot impart nourishment or refreshment, unless they are received and used, so Jesus, the Bread of life, and whose love does indeed rejoice the believer's heart, cannot impart spiritual strength or comfort, unless He be received and fed upon by faith! All-sufficient Saviour as He is to those who thus receive Him, He cannot be a Saviour to those who reject Him—for even He, the living Bread, who came down from heaven, can only nourish unto life everlasting those who feed on Him, in their

hearts, by faith with thanksgiving! Thus do these emblems most significantly teach, that the Saviour must not only be provided by God, but must also be *accepted* and relied upon by man? Still, however, we cannot but feel that the idea of a feast, designed to mark the bounty, munificence, and loving-kindness of the Divine Master, and furnished with divine food, to impart spiritual nourishment and gladness to the guests, was intended to be prominently presented to the mind; and that where the sacrament does not strengthen and refresh the believer's soul, it fails of the very purpose it was primarily appointed to promote. And is it not most gloriously adapted to this purpose? For, independently of the divine influences, emanating from the Holy Spirit, and conveyed through the channel of this sacrament, which are the source and support of all spiritual strength and comfort; is there not something in the very symbols themselves, so touchingly typical of the most affecting circumstances in the history of the Saviour's sufferings, as to be calculated, in a pre-eminent degree, to strengthen and refresh the souls of the faithful, in the Lord's supper? Does not all the glory of the Cross there pass before the view? Is not

the Lord Jesus Christ there set forth crucified before us? Does not His voice there break on our ears, crying out, "Behold and see, if there be any sorrow, like unto My sorrow, which I endured for your sake!" Can we look, in faith, on those hallowed emblems—reflect *what* they are intended to commemorate, and forbear to exclaim—"Behold, *how* He loved us!"

What doctrine of the Gospel is not there most powerfully preached! What precious truth of God's holy word, that can give strength or refreshment to the soul, is not there most affectingly proclaimed? Is it the most overwhelming demonstration of His love, that we desire? Oh! do we not there hear Him saying to us, "What could even I have done for you, to prove My love, more than I have done! Behold My hands, and My feet! See the proofs of My love which are written *there!* Can you look on them, and still doubt My love! Behold! it is I myself, who *so* loved you, and laid down My life for you." Is it the infinite value of our souls we wish to learn? What can so fully teach us this, as to see their Creator Himself stooping so low, and suffering so much, to become the Redeemer of our ruined souls?

Is it the infinite hatefulness of sin we desire to see awfully displayed? And do not those emblems of His body broken, and His blood poured out, as an atonement for sin, lift up their voice—yea, and that indeed a fearful voice to proclaim, *what* an accursed thing *sin* is in the sight of a holy God, if *such* blood must be shed, if *such* a sacrifice must be offered up, for its expiation? And does not the same voice as powerfully proclaim the infinite sufficiency of that sacrifice, and thus breathe into the believer's inmost soul that peace of God, which passeth all understanding—for what sins can be of too deep a dye for *that* blood to blot out, for ever, from the book of God's remembrance? What else can so fully reveal to us the glories of heaven, and the horrors of hell, as *such* blood shed to rescue us from the one, and to purchase for us the other? Or, if, under the pressure of overwhelming sorrow, or in the prospect of anticipated trials, we desire to have such an assurance of the unboundedness, and unchangeableness of *His* love, as will indeed satisfy us, that He will sympathise with us, and support us under all our tribulations, and never, never leave us, or forsake us, but be our everlasting Comforter, where, oh where shall we read this

assurance, written in such convincing characters, as in those memorials of His dying love, which remind us to *what* He gave *Himself*, even to the death of the cross, for our sakes, and for our salvation.

Now if your progress in sanctification, believer, will always be proportioned to your love to God, your Saviour, which will necessarily produce the deepest abhorrence of sin for His sake, and a desire for the closest assimilation to His character, what can have a more powerful tendency to deepen your love to Him, than the sacramental commemoration of His exceeding great love in dying for you? In truth, you could not commemorate that love in a suitable frame of mind, without feeling your heart drawn closer and closer in grateful affection to Him, whose stupendous love to you that sacrament so touchingly brings to your remembrance; and from this must necessarily spring a deep-rooted and continually increasing hatred of every modification of sin, from seeing the awful agonies of its Almighty Expiator, exhibited so affectingly to the eye of faith in the emblems of His broken body, and poured out blood.

There too the divine beauty of holiness shines forth with the most glorious splendour—

for what can give us a more sublime view of the infinite holiness of Jehovah, than to behold His own beloved co-eternal Son, when He stood before His Father, as the Substitute and Surety for sinners, bowed down even to death, by that Father's hand, in manifestation of His righteous wrath against those sins, which were laid, by imputation, on His sinless Son. Oh! with what awful, yet most glorious lustre does this invest the holiness of God—and how must it constrain the believer to desire to resemble Him, in the very point in which He is most worthy of our veneration and love, and to be holy, even as He is holy.

If then, you would indeed desire to advance in holiness, come, child of God, whenever the table of the Lord is spread, and the messenger of His love gives you the endearing invitation—"Come to the feast, for all things are now ready." Approach with deep reverence, with fervent gratitude, and a broken and contrite heart, to contemplate the sufferings, which your transgressions of God's holy law inflicted on that beloved Saviour, who endured the agonizing death of the cross, as a propitiation for *your* sins; that you may thus be so filled with hatred of sin, as the accursed cause of all His agonies,

that your most earnest prayers, watchings, and exertions will be unceasingly put forth, in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit, to enable you to crucify it, not merely in its open outbreakings before the world, but even in its most secret workings, in the hidden recesses of your soul, before God, and thus to become pure not merely in life and lips, but also pure in heart.

Come, believer, and read too, with a gladdened and a grateful heart, the pardon of all your sins, and your inalienable title to an inheritance of eternal glory, written in His infinitely precious blood—that thus feeling at peace with God, cherishing an humble assurance of acceptance in the Beloved, you may be enabled to serve Him without fear; and find by your own happy experience, that the joy of the Lord is your strength. For nothing, remember, will give a more cheerful character to your obedience to God's holy will and commandments, rendering it at once acceptable to Him, and delightful to yourself, than when it springs exclusively from gratitude for all His love, and is unsullied with the defiling stains of a spirit of self-righteousness—And therefore the more humbly confident you feel, that in the meritori-

ous righteousness of your Redeemer you have a foundation of hope, a title to God's favor and heaven's glory, with which nothing of your own is to be mixed, and of which no power in earth or hell can ever deprive you—the more abidingly you cherish a filial spirit, as one conscious that you have received the spirit of adoption, whereby you are privileged to look up to heaven, and cry "Abba, Father,"—the more will you delight in walking with your heavenly Father, in the path of holy obedience, in the footsteps of His dear Son. The more will your renewed heart shrink instinctively from even a casual contact with sin, the abominable thing which He hates—and the more will you experience His service to be perfect freedom, its ways to be ways of pleasantness, and all its paths to be peace.[1]

Now, nothing can be conceived more powerfully calculated to cut up by the very roots every trace of self-righteousness, and thus to

[1] See this most beautifully illustrated by Doctor Chalmers in his incomparable Lectures on the Romans, where he expatiates most eloquently "on the expulsive power of a new affection to dispossess an old one from the heart;" thus the love of Christ expels the love of sin, implants the love of holiness, and makes the service of God, before a drudgery, the believer's most congenial employment.

foster that spirit of grateful love to a Saviour-God, as the Divine Benefactor to whom you are entirely indebted for all your hopes of eternal glory—which, as we have seen, is the spring of all acceptable and happy obedience, than the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper—As it reminds us, that such was the depth of our depravity, the malignity of our guilt, the hopelessness of our condition, as rebels against our God, that nothing less than the sacrifice of His own co-eternal and co-equal Son, paying the full penalty due to the divine justice by our transgressions, could suffice to procure for us pardon, and a restoration to the divine favor, and the recovery of the forfeited inheritance of heaven, on such a footing, as would preserve inviolate the dignity of God's holy law, and the honour of His moral character and government.

How then, with *such* a fact, so awfully and affectingly forced on our recollections, at the Lord's Supper, can we indulge, while attending the sacramental commemoration of the Redeemer's death, in any vain conceits of our own righteousness, as entitling us, in any even the smallest conceivable degree, to the divine favor, or forming any portion of our title to the inheritance among the saints in light? How deeply

must we *there* feel our infinite obligations to His love, who has paid *such* a price, to purchase for us all those blessings of the everlasting covenant, which the Father so delights to bestow on all His believing people, for His sake. How cordially must we *there* feel disposed to make mention of His righteousness—even *His alone*, as the ground on which, exclusively, we rest all our hopes of justification—all our claims to a heavenly inheritance. And how must this feeling, by deepening our sense of what we owe to Him, who *so* loved us, and laid down His life for us, dispose our hearts to love Him with the most devoted love, and to serve Him with the most unqualified surrender of all we have, and are, to the advancement of His glory.

But there is, yet another point of view, in which the sacrament is peculiarly fitted, as we doubt not it was designed, to promote the sanctification of the children of God.

By the expression, "Ye do shew forth the Lord's death, till He come," the apostle plainly intimates, that one important purpose of this sacrament was to keep in the constant remembrance of the Lord's people His second coming, in power and great glory, to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe!

Now, St. John expressly asserts, that, though we do not know fully what, if we are one with Christ, we shall be in the future state of blessedness and glory, yet this we do know—that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is;" and that the influence of this glorious anticipation is sanctifying; for, he says, "every one that hath this hope in Him, (that is, in Christ,) purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Consequently, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by carrying the mind forward to this "blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God, our Saviour," must ever be to the children of God, who receive it with suitable preparedness of heart, one of the most powerful means, which the Holy Spirit here employs, for promoting their growth in grace and godliness. For, if the anticipation of the purchased and promised glory, connected with the second coming of the Lord, which is to be the portion of all His people, in the day of His appearing, and thenceforward, through the ages of eternity, be, as the apostle asserts, purifying in its influence, constraining the expectants of such glory to aim at the most exalted height of holiness, even to become pure, as the Son of God Himself is

pure, with what power must these purifying influences be felt, at the Supper of the Lord! For there the faithful communicant is led to look forward to the feast, of which the sacrament is intended to remind him, when the Saviour will be present, in the visible splendour of His glorified humanity, presiding in all the fulness of His divine majesty and love, while all His saints, appearing with glorified bodies, made like unto His glorious body, shall be assembled together at the banquet; and all that heaven can supply of magnificence and of glory, will be employed to throw suitable grandeur round the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

And when this anticipation of the glory of the Saviour's second coming is combined, as it ever should be, at the sacramental table, with the remembrance of the humiliation which attended His first advent to our earth; when the joys of which the glorified saints shall partake, on sitting down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, are contrasted with the sufferings of the Man of sorrows, which He endured to purchase those joys for His people—and the splendour of the Saviour's crown is thus blended in the believer's thoughts, while kneeling at that table, with the shame of His

cross; and the reflection comes over the believer's mind—He expired on that cross, to exalt me to the possession of a throne!—what speechless gratitude to the God of his salvation must this kindle in the Christian's heart! Can he *then* think of withholding any thing from Him, who did not hesitate to give Himself to such a death, for his sake. Can he *then* feel inclined to listen to the suggestions of Satan, tempting him to seek for even a momentary gratification in the indulgences of sin? Can he then question, for one instant, His dear Redeemer's love, or repine at *any* appointment of *His* hands, however blighting to his earthly hopes, or agonizing to his heart? Can he scruple to make any sacrifice, to endure any suffering, in testimony of his gratitude to *Him*? Or rather, I should say, must not the prospect of this promised glory, combined with the recollection of the price paid by his Redeemer to secure it for him, constrain him to adopt, with his whole heart and soul, those solemn words, which will seem to him a sweet, however feeble expression of his grateful love—"Here I offer and present unto thee, O Lord! myself,—my soul, and body, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

Thus you see, believer, how powerful an assistant, in furthering the great object of your supreme desire, even your attainment of the closest conformity to the character and will of your God, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is designed and fitted to prove. How peculiarly it is calculated, as we have shewn, to promote this object, by the affecting views it presents of the exceeding greatness of your Redeemer's self-sacrificing love—of the infinite hatefulness of sin, and beauty of holiness—of the sufficiency of the sacrifice, on which you are resting all your hopes of acceptance; and the value of the price, by which you have been redeemed from everlasting destruction—of the depth of humiliation, to which the Son of God stooped for your sake—the extent of suffering to which He submitted for your salvation—and the height of glory, to which He will exalt you, when He shall come in His glory, and shall sit upon the throne of His glory! See, then, that you gratefully avail yourself of all the blessed privileges, which the loving-kindness of your covenant-God puts within your reach! Connect with this sacrament the anticipation of the most abundant spiritual good—the most exalted spiritual enjoyment. Look forward to it as a de-

lightful meeting with the Saviour, who so loved you—whom you so desire to love. Make it the subject of special supplication, that the Holy Spirit will enable you to experience, to the fullest extent, the blessedness resulting from the fulfilment of that gracious promise of the Son of God—"I will come and sup with him, and he with Me." Should you desire any human help towards kindling the flame of devotional feeling, in addition to what the invaluable sacramental service of our church supplies, such works as those of Haweis and Bickersteth will prove, if perused prayerfully, a profitable auxiliary to your devotional meditations and self-examination, preparatory to appearing at the table of the Lord.

Carefully then examine, in the intervals between your successive attendances at that table, even should they be every Sabbath, what progress you are making in the divine life, proportioned to the privileges you enjoy. Are you really gaining ground? Is your soul actually strengthened and refreshed? Are your corruptions growing weaker, and your graces growing stronger? Are you able more successfully to strive against your besetting sin? Is your love to the Saviour deepening in your heart, and

more influential over your life? Is your conformity to His image more distinctly visible to the eye both of God and man? Are you advancing also in love and charity to all men? Do you find that since your last commemoration of this feast of love, you have imbibed so much more of the spirit, which is there so preeminently displayed, that you can, not only freely forgive, from your heart, the most unprovoked and aggravated injuries and insults, if you have received such, but also cordially delight in pouring out fervent prayer on behalf of your bitterest enemies, and ministering, by any means within your reach, to their temporal —but still more—their eternal welfare? And have you felt a warmer interest in the happiness of all, who come within the sphere of your influence? Are you treading more closely in the steps of Him, "who went about doing good" to the bodies and souls of men? Have you expended more deliberation in devising, and more time and money in executing schemes of practical benevolence, by which you may be instrumental in alleviating the wretchedness, and augmenting the enjoyments, temporal and spiritual, of all to whose comfort you can, through any medium, contribute? Are you

more solicitous, by gentleness and affectionateness of manner, to diffuse the sunshine of domestic happiness at home, and to gladden every social circle in which you may be engaged? Is it more constantly your endeavour to draw all, with whom you are acquainted, to Christ, if they are strangers to Him, and closer to Him, if they are already the objects of His love? Do you feel a livelier interest in every society, which is labouring to promote at once the glory of God, and the happiness of man? And do you testify this interest by denying yourself in all superfluities of luxury, whether in dress or any other department, that you may be able to contribute more largely to the support of those societies, and thus become, to the utmost extent that your means can reach, a benefactor, in the highest sense of the word, to your family, your friends, your country, and to all mankind?

Ask yourself also such questions as the following, in your self-examination—Am I advancing in the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost? Have I, since last I approached the sacred table, followed more faithfully the suggestions of this Blessed Spirit; listened more teachably to the slightest whisperings of His voice; cherished

more carefully His sweet and sanctifying influences; and watched more jealously against the indulgence of any thoughts, desires, or tempers, which could grieve Him, or provoke Him to withdraw from my soul, even for a season, the manifestations of His love, and the communications of His grace? Have I a sweeter sense of my Redeemer's love? Do I find communion with Him more of a foretasted heaven? And do I look forward with increasing ardency of desire for the day, when I shall sit down with Him, at the marriage supper of the Lamb? Do I find increasing happiness in meditation on His love, when I am alone—in conversing about Him, when I am in the society of His people—and pleading His cause with those, who do not yet know the preciousness of His name? Have I a larger measure, since last I commemorated His dying love, of that feeling towards Him, which prompted the pardoned penitent of old to bathe His feet with her tears, to wipe them with the hairs of her head, and to pour upon them the most precious ointment, deeming it best employed, when bestowed on Him, as a token of the gratitude with which her heart overflowed?

Do I thus increasingly feel it to be my

highest privilege and happiness, to lavish on Him every manifestation of my love; to consecrate to Him whatever I possess most precious; every gift He has bestowed—every talent He has entrusted to me; and to esteem myself honoured, with the highest honour that any created being can enjoy, in being permitted to be instrumental in advancing His cause, and promoting His glory? Am I thus continually realizing so much more of this blessed frame of mind, as to be enabled more fully to enter into the spirit of that sweet hymn, which breathes such love to Jesus, while contemplating His love, displayed on Calvary's cross, as should be perpetually burning on the altar of a believer's heart, and brings down the very essence of heaven's happiness into the believer's soul?

"See! from His hands—His side—His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingling down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet?
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realms of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing—so divine—
Demands my soul—my life—my all!"

Child of God! never rest satisfied, till you feel the full power of that sentiment pervading your whole soul, and regulating your whole life, (and surely the sacramental Table is pre-eminently the place, where you may hope that the Holy Spirit will bring it, in *all* its divine energy, to your heart!) and then you will want no other motive to constrain you to abound in every work and labour of love, for His name's sake; and to live, in all things, devotedly—exclusively—to Him who died for you!

Such, believer, are some of the points, which I would affectionately suggest to you, as matter for self-examination, preparatory to each successive commemoration of your Redeemer's dying love! And be assured, if you deal faithfully with your own soul in this matter, and do all that in you lieth, by prayer, meditation, study of the Scripture, watchfulness, and persevering exertion, in humble and cheerful dependence on the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit, to make the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as effectual a channel, as it was designed to be, for the conveyance of divine grace from the Fountain above, and the enjoyment of divine communion with the God of your salvation—if you do indeed *thus* seek to find it a spiritual feast, ap-

pointed to strengthen and refresh your soul, you shall not be disappointed of your desire. No! through the faithfulness of a covenant-God, and the power of the Blessed Spirit, it will be made a means of so invigorating and comforting your soul, that you will go on, in your heavenward course, progressing from strength to strength; continually advancing in holiness, and, its inseparable attendant, happiness; so that every successive attendance on this sacrament will find you at once nearer to, and meeter for, the sublime joy and satisfying pleasures of that world, where, in the presence of a triune God, there is the fulness of joy, and at His right hand pleasures for evermore.

And thus, believer, will you be enabled to look forward, with continually increasing desire and delight, to that swiftly approaching day of the Lord, which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was designed to keep in your constant recollection! For, oh, what glorious, what blissful anticipations are *you* privileged to associate with *that* day! Then, when "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;" when all, who have chosen their portion in this

world, shall bitterly feel, and despairingly bewail, the madness of their choice; when all, who have despised the love, and trampled on the blood, of the Lamb that was slain, shall call upon the rocks to fall on them, and the mountains to cover them from the face of the Lamb, for the day of His wrath is come, and who, that here rejected Him, shall *then* be able to stand before Him?—when trembling and horror shall seize the hypocrites; and all ungodly professors of an evangelical creed shall see, with inconceivable anguish and dismay, the frown of terrible displeasure on the countenance of Him, who sitteth on the throne, and shall hear from His lips the tremendous words, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into *everlasting* fire!" then, Christian, will be your day of triumph and of glory! Then shall you be enabled to contemplate, with calm composure, the awful spectacle of a burning earth—a dissolving world; because, in the Judge you shall behold your own beloved Saviour; and shall see a smile of love to you beaming on that face, from which the heavens and the earth are fleeing away. Then shall you hear from His lips those amazingly gracious words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father! inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation

of the world!" Then with a glorified body, and a glorified spirit, you shall rejoice before Him, with exceeding great joy—even "a joy unspeakable and full of glory!" Then shall you be reunited to *all*, whom on earth you have loved in Christ, and see them in possession of a happiness as unmixed, a glory as unsullied as your own; and with them enter on an eternity of perfect love, and perfect bliss. Then shall you fully understand what is the meaning of that wonderful promise—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me, in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

While deepening in humility, as you are exalted in honour, because, as you still ascend in the scale of blessedness and glory, you will still feel a deeper conviction, and more thankful remembrance, that for every successive step which you gain in that ascent you are entirely indebted to that love which has redeemed you from a merited hell, and purchased for you an inheritance in heaven; at *such* a costly price, you will cast your crown, in lowliest adoration, at the Redeemer's feet, and join with all His ransomed people in that song of praise, which, with eternally increasing gra-

titude and joy, they shall for ever lift up before His throne, saying—'Thou art worthy! for Thou hast redeemed us unto God, by Thy blood!—Worthy—worthy is the Lamb—the Lamb that was slain—to receive honour, and blessing, and glory, and power! Therefore unto Him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto the Father—unto Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three persons, and one God, be equal and everlasting praise, and honour, and glory, for ever and ever! Halleluiah! Halleluiah! Amen—and amen!'

THE END.

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